

The Sealed Order of the Irish Local Government Board.

The New Order, which the Irish Local Government Board has issued to Boards of Guardians, and to which we have referred in another column, is so important that we print, in full, the text of the Order as it affects the position of nurses.

Article 4 runs thus:—

(a) The Board of Guardians shall, as soon as may be requisite, and from time to time hereafter upon the occurrence of any vacancy, appoint, subject to our approval, fit persons to perform respectively the duties specified by our rules and regulations in force at the time to be the duties of the following officers:

1. Clerk to the guardians.
2. Medical officer of the workhouse.
3. Master of the workhouse.
4. Nurse of the workhouse.
5. Matron of the workhouse.
6. Schoolmaster of the workhouse.
7. Schoolmistress of the workhouse.
8. Porter of the workhouse.

(c) The following shall be the duties of the nurse of the workhouse:

1. To bring under the special notice of the medical officer every patient as soon as possible after admission into the sick wards.
2. To be responsible for the good nursing of the sick and for the satisfactory discharge of the duties of the nursing staff, and for the carrying out of the directions of the medical officer with respect to all medicines and medical appliances.
3. To inform the medical officer without any avoidable delay of any defects that may be observed in connection with the arrangements for the care and the nursing of the sick, including their clothing and diet.
4. To send a notification in writing to the master of the workhouse whenever the condition of any patient demands that the medical officer, the chaplain, or the relatives of such patient should be sent for or communicated with.
5. To see that everything connected with the patients and the wards is kept clean and in proper condition; and also to take care that all wards are duly ventilated, warmed, and lighted.
6. To see that the food is properly distributed to the patients, and to arrange that each patient receives the special treatment ordered by the medical officer, and generally to carry out all reasonable directions of the medical officer, to whom and the Board of Guardians only (notwithstanding anything contained in any other General Order) she shall be subordinate, save as regards the general disciplinary control of the master of the workhouse.
7. In the absence of the medical officer to exercise general medical supervision and control over the nurses, wardsmails, and attendants, and to maintain proper order and discipline in the sick wards in her charge.

(d) The Board of Guardians shall, subject to our approval in each case, appoint such and so many "qualified nurses" to assist the "nurse of the workhouse" in the performance of her duties as above mentioned, and generally in the nursing and care of

the sick in the workhouse, and also such and so many "wardsmails" and "attendants" for the discharge of menial duties in the infirmary or hospital, as we shall from time to time think necessary.

From clause 7, it would appear that the general supervision and control of the nurses is exercised by the nurse in charge only in the absence of the medical officer. We think it should be made quite clear that the head nurse should be directly responsible to the medical officer for the fulfilment of his orders as to the treatment of the sick, and to the Board of Guardians for the good discipline of her department. To quote Sir Douglas Galton, in an article on the Administration of Hospitals, in Quain's Dictionary of Medicine. "The nursing establishment cannot be made responsible on the side of discipline to the medical officers. Simplicity of rules, placing the nurses in all matters regarding management of the sick absolutely under the orders of the medical staff, and in all disciplinary matters absolutely under the Lady Superintendent or Matron to whom the medical officers should refer all cases of neglect, is essential to due discipline and efficiency. . . . But neither the medical officer, nor any other male head should ever have power to punish for disobedience. His duty should end with reporting the case to the female head, who is responsible to the governing authority of the hospital, as all her nurses and servants, in the performance of their duties, are immediately responsible to the Matron only. If the Matron or Lady Superintendent does not exercise the authority entrusted to her with judgment and discretion, it is then the legitimate province of the governing body to interfere and remove her."

Legal Matters.**NURSING UNIFORM IN THE DOCK.**

Maria Williams, who, as we reported last week, pleaded guilty to stealing several gold watches, and who has been many times convicted, was brought up on remand before Mr. Garrett at the South Western Police Court to receive sentence. She was dressed in nursing uniform. The magistrate said the woman had committed a series of deliberate frauds, and she had made the matter worse by masquerading in the dress of a profession that was justly honoured and trusted. He sentenced her to twelve months' imprisonment with hard labour. We are glad to observe that the magistrate drew attention to the cruel wrong done to the nursing profession by the assumption of their uniform by criminals. We hope that magistrates will urge the necessity for the State Registration of Nurses so that it will be no longer possible for women of the criminal classes to pose in this guise. At present hardly a week passes without nursing uniform appearing in the dock.

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)