

# THE BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING

WITH WHICH IS INCORPORATED  
**THE NURSING RECORD**  
EDITED BY MRS BEDFORD FENWICK

No. 777.

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 21, 1903.

Vol. XXX.

## Editorial.

### THE FIRST CONJOINT EXAMINING BOARD.

It is with great pleasure that we announce the decision of the British Gynæcological Society to appoint a conjoint board of Medical and Nursing Examiners in connection with the examination which it is establishing in maternity and gynæcological nursing. The Gynæcological Society has already given practical proof of the liberality of its attitude towards women by admitting them to its fellowship, being the only medical society which at present does not impose a sex disqualification. It is, therefore, not surprising that it should be the first medical society in England to appreciate the importance of securing the co-operation of the Matrons of hospitals in the examination of nurses, and that it should have courteously invited the Superintendents of Nursing in Maternity Hospitals and Hospitals for Women, maintaining a certain number of beds, to take seats on the examining board.

This action proves not only the open-mindedness and liberality of view of the Gynæcological Society, but also the value of conference between medical and nursing bodies on subjects affecting the educational interests of nurses. At the Conference, arranged on the invitation of the Gynæcological Society between some of its members and representatives of the Matrons' Council, Mrs. Bedford Fenwick strongly advocated the appointment of a conjoint board of Medical Practitioners and Matrons in connection with the proposed examination. The suggestion was accorded a fair and courteous hearing, and ultimately the result has proved that it received the adherence of the Fellows of the Society.

We sincerely hope that the Matrons who have received invitations to act on this board will appreciate not only the courtesy of the Gynæcological Society, but also their profes-

sional obligations in connection with the invitation. The fact that this examination of nurses has been undertaken proves that practitioners in the special branch concerned have found the need of some proof of efficiency on the part of the nurses to whom they entrust the care of their patients. This is not surprising, as the most brilliant and careful medical work can be marred, and a practitioner's reputation be consequently injured, by the carelessness or ignorance of a nurse. Pending, therefore, the institution of an examination in general nursing by an authoritative body, we welcome the organisation of examinations in specialties when a basis of general training is a requirement, and the examining board is a conjoint one.

These provisions we regard as essential at the present day, for while as regards the science of nursing the examiner should be a medical practitioner, in details of practical nursing work an experienced nurse should hold this position. This principle has already been recognised in Victoria, where a strong conjoint board of examiners has been appointed to conduct an independent examination of pupils of all the leading general training-schools. It is the principle which the Matrons of special hospitals are now invited to endorse in this country, and if they rise to the occasion, and prove the value of their co-operation in this connection, we shall have a forcible plea for the appointment of a similar board when we go to Parliament asking for our legal registration, and, as a natural consequence, for the appointment of a board of examiners to conduct an examination in general nursing.

The issues involved at the present time are therefore important, and we earnestly ask the Matrons concerned to consider them carefully before coming to a decision. Many of them, we are aware, shrink from public action; but, in our view, the professional positions they hold carry with them public obligations.

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)