

# THE BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING

WITH WHICH IS INCORPORATED  
THE NURSING RECORD

EDITED BY MRS BEDFORD FENWICK

No. 876.

SATURDAY, JANUARY 14, 1905.

Vol. XXXIV.

## Editorial.

### A BOUNDEN DUTY.

"It surely behoves all who have the interests of nurses and nursing work at heart . . . to endeavour to come to some unanimous decision."

The above words occur in the article on the State Registration of Nurses (to which we have already alluded) by Miss Monk, Sister Matron of King's College Hospital. We are entirely in agreement with the writer in this connection, but it is only fair to point out that, with a few notable exceptions, those who are responsible for the lack of unanimity are the Matrons of the large London training-schools. Over and over again during the last seventeen years the olive branch has been held out to them by associations of nurses, who, realising the paramount necessity for the definition of a standard of nursing education, and for organisation in the ranks of trained nurses, have striven to impress upon the Matrons of these training-schools the necessity for co-operation, for the free discussion of the problems with which the nursing world is confronted, for an open-minded attitude towards these problems, and for conference between those who have the interests of nurses and nursing work at heart, and who are striving earnestly for their improvement.

So far the majority of the Matrons have stood aside, and all attempts to induce them to take a wider survey of the nursing world than that confined by the walls of the hospitals with which they are connected have been barren of result. They have adopted a *non possumus* attitude, and, consequently, the movement for organisation has progressed without them. It is a hopeful sign that a Matron who is amongst the opponents of Registration should at least realise the necessity for conference amongst all who are interested in nursing work. The bedrock principle upon which any useful conference could take place is, however, that all the interests involved should be represented. Hitherto the attitude of the majority of the

Matrons of the London training-schools has been that the Matrons of these schools alone are concerned in the question of organisation, and that their decision on the question is conclusive and final. The day has gone past for any such autocratic attitude. They undoubtedly have a stake in the question; but, as has been pointed out in this journal, the training-schools, in relation to nurses, are concerned primarily and principally with the education of the pupil nurse, in the same way as the medical schools deal with the education of students. When the medical student becomes a qualified practitioner he passes out of the jurisdiction of the school authorities, and comes under the professional control of the General Medical Council. The nurse, on the other hand, passes out of her school and comes under no control whatever. She is a unit responsible to no one. What is needed for her professional well-being is the establishment of a governing body, representative not only of the training-schools, but numbering amongst its members direct representatives of fully-trained nurses. Thus the rank and file, as well as those possessing vested interests, would have a voice in the government of nursing as a profession, and this is a cardinal point in all good government.

We are certainly of opinion that metropolitan and provincial Matrons should come forward and help to organise the vocation to which they belong. That organisation in some form must take place is universally acknowledged, and it is not a dignified position for the Matrons of our principal training-schools to adopt to stand aside until compelled to move, and so to follow in the rear when their place was in the van, or to assume that by any form of organisation they can act for certificated nurses without their participation. Several of their colleagues in London and many in the country realise their duty in this respect, and have given generously both time and experience to help to organise nursing on a liberal basis rather than on narrow lines, knowing that any such attempt is doomed to failure.

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)