

Wedgwood considers the nurses to have been wise in renouncing what belonged to others as well as to themselves—not of their own inclination, not of their own free will, not even of their own knowledge but—simply and solely because “H.R.H. wished them to do so.” A more hopeless, inane, condemnation of the proceedings which have taken place in the Royal British Nurses’ Association could hardly have been advanced than Miss Wedgwood has done. She has, in fact, utterly discredited both the proceedings in question and the nurses by whose assistance those proceedings were carried out. It is, therefore, hardly to be wondered at, that women of any intellectual power, women of any mental independence whatsoever, unite in ridiculing her pronouncements.

We pass on to the next “point” of any importance in Miss Wedgwood’s article. She says “The matrons and the sisters and nurses have each thirty representatives, but there will not be any danger of the matrons’ influence in the Association being weakened by the nurses’ vote (*sic*) because their numbers are largely reinforced by the matrons of certain hospitals, who will hold permanent *ex officio* seats on the Council.” We find it hard to believe that Miss Wedgwood wrote, on behalf of the officials, this official communication, in the official organ of the Association, without being aware of the facts. But, beyond ignorance, there is only one explanation possible for the inaccurate and most misleading statement in question. Miss Wedgwood must know that the number of matrons who can take *ex-officio* seats on the Council is very small, and that the number who will do so can probably be counted on her fingers. She must be aware that many of the matron members of the Association, who are connected with the leading provincial hospitals, have resigned their membership, declining to be any longer connected with an Association so dishonourably mismanaged. She must, therefore, know that it is a physical and absolute impossibility that her statement can be true. Then she must be aware that the ladies elected upon the Council do not comprise the Matron of one single important hospital; that, out of the thirty, seven are superintendents of nursing homes, and two of private nursing institutions; that four are Matrons of small children’s hospitals, and three of small special hospitals; that two are Matrons of Poor Law infirmaries, and one of a lunatic asylum; that nine are connected with small general hospitals in the provinces

and in Paris; and that in order, even then, to scrape together the requisite number of “matrons,” the officials have been compelled to add the name of an altogether untrained nurse who is in charge of an orphanage!

Then Miss Wedgwood must be well aware that out of these thirty so-called Matrons, only eleven live in London and the surrounding districts, while nineteen live in the provinces and abroad. On the other hand, Miss Wedgwood is also aware that of the thirty sisters and nurses, no less than 29 live in London—so that the Matrons are, so far as their votes go, hopelessly swamped. Knowing these facts, as she must, it is astonishing to us that a person in Miss Wedgwood’s position, should venture to assert that “there will not be any danger of the matrons’ influence in the Association being weakened by the nurses’ vote.” Miss Wedgwood has taken a prominent part in the recent proceedings, as her colleagues throughout the United Kingdom will doubtless remember in future. The Matrons have been deprived absolutely of the voice and authority in the Nurses’ Association which they formerly possessed, to its great benefit and welfare. The Matrons have been placed under the dictation, supremacy, control, and guidance of the Sisters and Nurses, in the Royal Chartered Corporation of Nurses—a fact which is quite understood in most hospitals throughout the United Kingdom. At any rate, it is too late, and altogether too ridiculous, for Miss Wedgwood to pretend that she is unaware of what she and her friends have deliberately done.

### Annotations.

#### A ROYAL PATIENT.

THE accident which happened to the Prince of Wales, this week, will arouse universal regret and sympathy. His Royal Highness slipped while going downstairs, and in trying to save himself, fractured his left knee-cap. He was conveyed to London, and is under the excellent care of Sir Thomas Smith and Sir William MacCormac. As our readers know, the accident is more serious than it sounds. Caused generally by violent muscular action, the fragments of the patella are drawn widely apart, and it is most difficult to keep them so closely together as to secure strong and perfect union. It must be expected, therefore, to be some weeks before His Royal Highness will be able to move about again.

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