

The Honour of the Cloth.

By the time the current issue of the RECORD is before the majority of our readers, the much-discussed Nurses' Ball at the Lambeth Infirmary will have taken place. As the question of dancing in institutions organized for the relief of poor sick persons is one on which we feel very strongly, we have made numerous enquiries concerning the instance under discussion, and we are glad to find that, excepting by the male officials who are advocating this breach of decorum, this Nurses' Ball is not desired. We cannot but regret that Dr. Quarry, the Medical Superintendent, has departed from his wise and kindly rule, and lent his support to a suggestion which can but bring the nursing school for which he is doing so much into disrepute. We learn that it is now eight years since this undesirable form of recreation was permitted in the Lambeth Infirmary, and we have no doubt that, for the future, no such function will be allowed.

To casual outsiders, and even to good-natured Guardians, the distaste of refined nurses to be associated with such a function may appear hypersensitive; but the tone in well-managed training schools has changed considerably for the better within the last decade, and to suggest, as one of our correspondents does, that well-educated and respectable women, between 25 and 30, are incapable of arranging to spend a night's leave out of bounds, without danger to their moral well-being, presupposes these professional women to be devoid both of common sense and inherent virtue, an imputation which we indignantly repudiate on their behalf. We do not doubt that, by now, all concerned in supporting the Ball honestly regret having done so; under these circumstances the least said the soonest mended.

For ourselves; being very jealous of the honour of our profession, we congratulate the Matron of the Lambeth Infirmary upon the courage with which she has, in the most courteous spirit, performed a public duty in opposing the dance, and we cannot but commend the impulse which inspired that member of the nursing staff, who publicly repudiated the slur which she considered cast upon her cloth by a statement made in the press that she and her colleagues would "strike" unless they were permitted to indulge in junketings of which they strongly disapproved. It is only by the nurses themselves maintaining a high standard of professional ethics that the public will hold them in well-deserved respect. It would be well if the Local Government Board would express its disapproval of Infirmary Balls, and enlist the help of the officials in authority in preventing such *omnium gatherums*.

Nursing Echoes.

* * * All communications must be duly authenticated with name and address, not for publication, but as evidence of good faith, and should be addressed to the Editor, 20, Upper Wimpole Street, W.



WE beg to acknowledge, with many thanks, a subscription of £1 1s. 0d. from Mrs. C. H. Raphael, for Sir Julian Goldsmid's Home of Rest for Nurses at Brighton.

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THE Matronship of the St. Marylebone Infirmary is now vacant. This Infirmary is one of the best appointed of our State Hospitals, and we hope that, in selecting a new Matron, the Guardians will not make it a necessary condition that applicants should be members of the nursing staff of St. Thomas' Hospital, as this greatly restricts the number of suitable candidates. As a rate-payer in the parish of Marylebone, which has provided one of the most magnificent infirmaries in existence for its sick poor, we distinctly object to this institution being merely an appendage of St. Thomas' Hospital. It should stand on its own feet and take the rank to which it is entitled. So long, however, as it is a close borough for St. Thomas' Hospital, this is impossible.

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THERE seems to be absolutely no reason for uniting these two institutions. If St. Thomas' and the Lambeth Infirmary were affiliated, the arrangement would be more reasonable, though even then we should consider it unadvisable; but there is no more ground for uniting Marylebone with St. Thomas' than there would be for uniting Kensington Infirmary with St. Bartholomew's. These considerations must, we feel sure, commend themselves to the rate-payers of Marylebone. The arrangement is to the advantage of St. Thomas' Hospital beyond doubt, as it affords an influential post for a member of the nursing staff, and an extended training ground for its probationers. It is not easy to see, however, how Marylebone benefits by the compact. The organization of the Nightingale Committee is in many ways old-fashioned and behind the times, and the St. Marylebone Infirmary would make greater progress if freed from its connection with this training school. As an instance of this we may point out that the Nightingale Fund, which pays fifteen of the probationers at Marylebone

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