

Many nurses will be interested to learn that the living of Sonning, in Berkshire, has been presented by the Crown to Canon Holmes, who was resident chaplain at Cuddesdon to the late Bishop of Oxford. Canon Holmes has many friends amongst nurses who will wish him well in his new appointment. Not a few are indebted to him for various kindnesses, and of these not the least is that he has devoted time and thought to studying nursing questions, and has a thorough grip of nursing politics.

We are glad to note that the Walsall Press is supporting the probationers at the Infirmary in their objection to the order of the Workhouse Master that the domestic staff shall wear their uniform. The *Walsall Free Press* points out that "the nurses have a right to their uniform. By serving long hours and doing arduous work they qualify for their high vocation." Further, that the Medical Officer to the Infirmary reported against the Master's action as detrimental to the interests of the institution, and tending to lower the tone of the personnel of the staff. It pertinently concludes:—"If uniforms are not to be distinctive then there is no reason why the Matron should not wear the same uniform as the female inmates, or vice-versa, and the Master appear in the garb of his male pauper charges."

From a letter addressed to our contemporary by Mr. Totterdell, it would appear that our remarks on the uniform question are distasteful to him. As we dealt with the matter from a professional standpoint—a standpoint which is apparently incomprehensible to him—this is not surprising. He is also evidently disturbed that nurses have at their back a professional journal "ready to champion their cause." He, at least, appreciates the power of the press!

In spite of the Chairman's decision the *Walsall Observer* doubts whether the Board will be able to retain the services of its probationers against their will, and is of opinion that the *esprit de corps* of the profession will certainly prevent its replacing them, and that the effect under any circumstances cannot fail to be hurtful to the prospects of the infirmary and those who seek its aid.

The Guardians will be wise to rescind the objectionable order, for the probationers will certainly receive widespread support in their reasonable claim for a distinctive uniform.

Dr. Louise G. Robinovitch, the Editor of the *Journal of Medical Pathology*, discusses at some

length the question of the advisability of employing women nurses in male wards for the insane. He says:—

There are few physicians working in the field of insanity who are not alive to the great difficulty encountered in the treatment of the patients: their maltreatment by the attendants. The evil has always existed, but every now and then there is a fresh outbreak of demonstration against it. Investigations follow, then such feasible changes for the improvement of conditions are made as are consistent with the policies of the existing administrations, and finally the cause falls into its usual state of obnubilation, until a new series of shocking occurrences draws the attention of the public eye. While this evil applies to both the men and women patients, those who have followed out the question for any number of years will recall that the particular sort of abuses in question are brought to notice first from the men's wards, where there are men attendants. It is this side of the question that appeals most strongly for consideration and solution.

The question of having women nurses to attend to men insane has been brought up at various times within the last few years as a sheer thought—a problem so to speak—the physician hesitating to take any decided step in the direction, for many reasons that impose themselves on the mind travelling in the deep groove of routine. Conservatism is an excellent thing in many lines of business, but there are conditions in which radical remedies are the only ones feasible. The placing of women nurses in the wards for insane is a consummation most devoutly to be hoped for. Indeed, some practical work already done in that line warrants the formation of a most positive conclusion regarding the practicability of this innovation in the treatment of the insane.

A few years ago the administration at the Philadelphia City Hospital tried an experiment in that line that proved most successful. The male attendants were displaced by women nurses in the alcoholic wards, with the hope of doing away with just such rough and cruel handling of the helpless patients as is alleged to have taken place in the insane pavilion at Bellevue Hospital. The experiment was made with that feeling of fear of failure which attends most innovations of this character, but the apprehensions were soon dissipated. Not only was it found that the delirious alcoholic patients could be treated without being beaten, as it was claimed the male attendants found it necessary to do in self-defence against the patient's violent behaviour, but the patients

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