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Editorial.

AN ANOMALOUS POSITION.

THE activity manifested at the present time by Boards of Guardians in relation to defining the position of Superintendent Nurses of Workhouse Infirmaries is, no doubt, stimulated by the inquiry which is at present being conducted by the Local Government Board. However wide a ground this inquiry may cover, it is recognized that the crux of the whole question is the position of the Superintendent Nurse, and all over the kingdom discussion is seething as to the position which this official shall hold in the future. We note that a resolution embodying the views of one Board of Guardians on this all important question has been sent round with a circular letter to other Boards, the object being the subordination of the Superintendent Nurse to the Master and Matron. Unquestionably the position of the Superintendent Nurse is at present unsatisfactory and anomalous. The highly trained professional worker is placed under the authority of the Master and Matron of the Workhouse, who, as a rule, do not know what constitutes efficient nursing, and cannot there-

fore supervise her work, or know if it is satisfactorily performed or not. On the other hand, they are, as a class, ignorant of the needs of trained nursing, and opposed to the better conditions which the Superintendent of Nursing endeavours to introduce.

There is, in our opinion, but one line of action which can produce well organized and consolidated effort in the management of workhouses. This is that the Matron of the Workhouse must herself be a thoroughly qualified nurse, and so capable of supervising the work of all the officials placed under her control. We are convinced that whether this reform is enforced now, or twenty years hence, it will have to be carried out before the nursing in country workhouse infirmaries is placed on a satisfactory basis.

It is sometimes urged that however highly trained nurses may be in their own special duties, they do not receive an education which qualifies them to perform all the duties of a Workhouse Matron. This we admit—but neither do the Matrons at present appointed receive this training, or they would possess the knowledge which would make them competent to supervise the nurses who are placed

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