

**THE**  
**BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING**  
WITH WHICH IS INCORPORATED  
**THE NURSING RECORD**  
EDITED BY MRS BEDFORD FENWICK

No. 995.

SATURDAY, APRIL 27, 1907.

Vol. XXXVIII.

**Editorial.**

**NURSES' HOMES.**

It will generally be conceded that if a person is to be capable of the best work his or her home surroundings must be healthy, congenial and restful. The home may be as simple as possible, but it must be a spot to which he can turn for the repose and refreshment of both mind and body. While this applies to the surroundings of all workers it does so in an especial degree to those of hospital nurses. Their life in the wards is a strenuous one, making large inroads on vitality and nervous force, and if they are to be strong, physically and mentally serene, cheerful and good tempered, when on duty, their surroundings in their off-duty time must be such as to promote rest and to permit of mental recuperation. We wish we could think this was invariably the case.

The large London hospitals are expected to lead the way in nursing matters, but we could point to various provincial hospitals where far more thought has been given to the adequate housing of the nursing staffs than in some of our leading London hospitals. At St. Thomas', the London, and Guy's, not to name others, the nurses are excellently housed, but of several Nurses' Homes connected with hospitals of repute, it may be said with confidence that they would be condemned, not only as unhealthy, but unsafe in case of fire, were they inspected by a sanitary authority.

This raises another point. Why should Hospital Committees, composed of philanthropic gentlemen, be permitted to house their nurses under conditions which would not be tolerated under more public management? Imagine the outcry there would be

if the nurses in the hospitals under the control of the Metropolitan Asylums Board, for instance, were expected to live in Homes similar to those in which hundreds of nurses working in hospitals supported by voluntary contributions are housed, Homes which—like Convents—are secure from any public inspection. We consider that all residences in which employees are housed, Nurses' Homes included, should have to satisfy a local authority, presumably in this case the London County Council, that they are sanitary, and safe for the purpose for which they are used. Because they are supported on charitable contributions this is no reason why those responsible should be allowed to maintain in them conditions prejudicial to health.

And beyond provision for healthy and safe surroundings, one comfort should be provided for every hospital nurse, and that is a bedroom to herself. She lives in public all day, or all night, as the case may be, the dining and sitting-rooms in the Home are public rooms, and to have no solitude, even in her own bedroom, but to be compelled to share it with a companion, and, perhaps, an uncongenial one, is the worst hardship that befalls many a nurse in her hospital life. To some natures quiet and solitude are as much a necessity as food and drink. Without them mental balance and serenity seem unattainable. For this reason cubicles are to be condemned as the slight divisions form no hindrance to the chatter and gossip which go on without restraint between some of the occupants. A nurse's bedroom should be her own sanctum, and within reasonable limits she should be allowed to arrange it as she pleases, and to gain in it the rest of mind and body so essential for the efficient performance of her work.

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)