

# THE BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING

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

No. 1,020.

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 19, 1907.

Vol. XXXIX.

## Editorial.

### THE PROPOSED DEGRADATION OF MATRONS BY THE ASYLUMS BOARD.

From time to time the nursing profession is faced with sudden crises. Such an one was the attempt of seven city financiers to obtain incorporation by the Board of Trade, with the object of securing the control of the nursing profession, a scheme which was defeated by the vigorous protest at once made when the danger was exposed through the medium of this journal.

A situation of equal peril has been created by the action of the Metropolitan Asylums Board on Saturday last, when a Bye-law was carried depriving the Matrons in its hospitals of their rank as principal officers and degrading them to a second class position. This Bye-law now awaits the sanction of the Local Government Board.

At present the principal officers in a hospital under the Metropolitan Asylums Board are the Medical Superintendent, the Matron, and the Steward, and each reports on his or her own department to the Hospitals Sub-committee, which is deputed by the Asylums Board to manage each hospital. To this Committee the Matron is responsible. She engages her subordinate officers, and recommends them for appointment to her own Committee which interviews them, on which occasion she is always present.

A copy of her report is then sent to the Head Quarters and there initialled. The officer who is responsible for the efficiency of the nursing arrangements thus has the necessary power for the maintenance of efficiency and discipline in regard to the nursing staff.

If the Bye-law now adopted by the Metropolitan Asylums Board takes effect, the result will be to make the Matron a cipher, with the result that not only the position of the nursing staff but the quality of the nursing will deteriorate; and of course the ultimate sufferers will be the patients.

Further, the Matrons of a great public service like the Metropolitan Asylums Board cannot be degraded without the position of all Matrons of all Poor Law infirmaries being prejudicially affected. It behoves all members of the nursing profession, therefore, who value its usefulness and honour, and realise the importance of maintaining its efficiency unimpaired, to unite at once before it is too late to protest against the retrograde proposal of the Metropolitan Asylums Board.

We understand that the Medical Superintendents of the Board have not been consulted on this matter, and we believe they are too well aware of the value of efficiency and discipline in the nursing departments of their hospitals, and of the position due to the Matron in order that she may maintain them, to approve of the Board's new Bye-law, which will affect not only the position of the Matron but, as a sequence, her salary, her leave, and her scale of rations.

It is imperative that action should be taken, and taken immediately, to acquaint the President of the Local Government Board with the views of the Nursing Profession before this pernicious Bye-law is sanctioned; and the Matrons' Council of Great Britain and Ireland, with that public spirit for which it is distinguished, is arranging a Public Meeting of Protest at the Medical Society's Rooms, 11, Chandos Street, Cavendish Square, on Saturday afternoon next, October 19th, at 4 p.m., when the President, Miss Isla Stewart, will take the chair, and resolutions will be proposed calling public attention to the detrimental effects of the proposed Bye-law.

It is hoped that not only matrons and nurses, but members of the public will attend this meeting, and that so forcible a protest will be made that the Local Government Board will refuse its sanction to a Bye-law which is unjust and injurious to the nursing profession, the rate-paying public, and the sick poor.

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)