

treatment. We would submit to the Board that the lowering of the position of the Matrons, and consequently of the Nursing Staff, will weaken the dependence of the public in the Hospitals, and difficulties and disagreeables now unknown will be likely to occur.

We trust you will pardon us for sending this manifesto to you, and beg you to believe that, as conscientious officers of the Board, no other course was open to us but to lay before you the reasons why we think that your Resolution would be detrimental to the best interests of the patients and the Nursing Staff.

We beg to remain,

Your most obedient servants,

C. L. BURTON, South-Western Hospital.

EUPHEMIA ROSS, Western Hospital.

FRANCES AMBLER JONES, South-Eastern Hospital.

H. M. SCHOOLING, North-Eastern Hospital.

L. A. MORGAN, Northern Hospital.

E. M. COTTRILL, Tooting Bec Asylum.

EMMELINE M. BANN, Brook Hospital.

MAUD M. LLOYD, North-Western Hospital.

MARGARET JONES, Gore Farm Hospital.

SUSAN A. VILLIERS, Fountain Hospital.

A. THOMAS, The Park Hospital.

ALICE A. BROWNE, Grove Hospital.

E. M. HOWELL, Leavesden Asylum.

FLORENCE DAY, Eastern Hospital.

HELEN WACHER, Joyce Green Hospital.

Mr. Cornell then asked the Chairman "Whether his attention had been called to statements in the Press and elsewhere to the effect that 'friction' exists between the Managers and their Matrons, and that the Board contemplates 'degrading' its Matrons from first to second class officers."

In the absence of the Chairman of the Board, Mr. J. T. Helby, consideration of the matter was postponed till his arrival.

Later in the morning, Mr. Helby made the following statement from the Chair:—

STATEMENT OF THE CHAIRMAN.

There appears to be considerable misconception with regard to the action which this Board is supposed to have taken with regard to the Matrons in its Asylums, Hospitals, and other Institutions.

What the Managers did at their last meeting was to approve a Draft which has been prepared for submission to the Local Government Board of a proposed new Order to consolidate and amend the Orders (some 73 in number) now subsisting, which have been issued from time to time by the Poor-Law Board and Local Government Board during the past forty years for regulating the proceedings of the Managers.

In various quarters this draft Order is represented as containing a provision for "degrading the position of the Matrons," for "reducing the Matrons from first class to second class officers," and so forth. The Draft makes no division whatever of its officers into classes, and the expressions "first class" and "second class" nowhere occur in it as applied to officers—indeed, one of its main

features is the omission of the classification of officers, which obtains in existing Orders, into "principal" and "subordinate"—a classification which is productive of anomalies.

The only sense in which it can be pretended that the position of the Matrons is affected, is that under the Order, as drafted, future Matrons would be appointed, promoted, and discharged without the previous sanction of the Local Government Board being necessary, exactly as in every other hospital service, general or infectious, except the Poor-Law service, and that it is expressly provided that the chief officer of every establishment shall be the head of the establishment, and have supreme control, subject to the regulations of the Managers, of every officer and servant therein. This is the actual working arrangement now, but it seems to call for express enactment in a new and complete code. It cannot be supposed that the Managers or the Medical Superintendent would attempt to impose restrictions on the proper discharge of a Matron's duties, or in any way unnecessarily interfere to hamper the relations between a Matron and her Nursing Staff. They must be assumed to desire, in appointing a lady to the important position of Matron, to place her in the position she should occupy for promoting the efficient Nursing and comfort of the patients, and the good name of the Asylum or Hospital in which she is placed.

It is stated that the so-called degradation of their Matrons will prevent the Board getting the best type of Nurse. I am sorry to say that under the present system of describing some officers as "Principal" and others as "Subordinate," the percentage of Nurses trained in London general Hospitals is not by any means so large as could be wished. (The Chairman here gave the number of Nurses employed by the Board who had been trained in Poor-Law Infirmaries, and London general hospitals respectively.)

It is even asserted that the alleged "degradation" will carry with it the granting of inferior emoluments and food. There is nothing whatever in the Draft to justify so ridiculous an assumption.

It should be unnecessary to add that whatever may be thought of the effect of the Managers' proposals, the Draft, following well-established precedent, expressly safeguards all rights and privileges of existing officers.

The Chairman suggested that a reply, incorporating the substance of the statement he had made, should be sent to the Matrons' Council.

DEPRIVATION OF STATUS.

The Hon. Maude Stanley said, in relation to the Chairman's statement, that, though she did not care about the word, the Matrons were "degraded," inasmuch as they were put in a lower position. It was a quibble under these circumstances, to take exception to the use of the terms first and second class officers. In connection with the figures given by the Chairman as to Nurses in the Board's employ who had received their training in general hospitals, Miss Stanley pointed out that they did not include the large number

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