

NURSING ECHOES.

The meeting of the Matrons' Council of Great Britain and Ireland takes place on Friday, 9th inst., at 3.30 p.m. There will be no Paper or Discussion, as every Matron is more or less overpowered with work in connection with the War.

Miss Cockrell, Matron of the Marylebone Infirmary, is doing good service as Matron of the hospital at the Alexandra Palace, which is being used as a clearing-house for the Belgian Refugees, the Marylebone Guardians having given her leave of absence for this purpose. It is desirable to keep the refugees under observation for a time, in case any may be suffering from infectious diseases, as well as to permit them to recover somewhat from the effects of the harrowing experience through which they have passed. The "Bijou theatre" has been converted into the hospital.

We have every sympathy with the nurses of the Cleveland Street Infirmary, who have complained to the Holborn Guardians that the training they are now receiving is not that for which they entered the Poor Law service. If adequate opportunities for training can no longer be provided at the Infirmary, which has ranked high as a nursing school, the Guardians should arrange that the pupils should complete their term elsewhere.

The Barnet Board of Guardians have appointed a new Superintendent Nurse in the place of the late Miss Charlotte Phipps. Mr. Jukes, one of the Guardians, said it might be made clear to the candidates that the position was "inferior" to the position of Master, who was the head official. There had, he said, been some misunderstanding in the past, and he thought it would be well to guard against similar misunderstanding in the future.—The Rev. R. A. Meaden: The position is only inferior nominally, not practically. "We shall drive decent people away," he added, "if we say the position is 'inferior.'"—The Chairman: We are bound by the rules of the Local Government Board in the matter. The position of the Superintendent Nurse, who is subordinate to the Master, is inevitable.

Dr. Stewart, the medical officer, wrote suggesting that the Board should define clearly and accurately the position of the Superintendent Nurse, relative to the Master and Matron. "Until she receives," he said, "her proper place, which has not been the case in the past, it is likely that friction and misunderstanding

will exist between house officials and the infirmary—a condition of things detrimental to efficient and harmonious working." He suggested as a practical solution of the position: "That a special book be provided, to be in the charge of the Superintendent Nurse, in which the nurses should enter all complaints, requests for off-duty time, and all such matters that should be brought to the notice of the infirmary officers, the Superintendent Nurse to deal with those matters that are within her province. For the rest, the Superintendent Nurse to bring these entries to the notice of the Master or Matron, or myself, according to the nature of the entry."—The Chairman said he thought the suggestion a perfectly reasonable one, and he hoped the Board would adopt it at once.—Mr. Hackforth Jones moved, and Miss Wimbush seconded, that the suggestion of the doctor should be adopted and acted upon.—The motion was carried.

Miss Cockram, from Skipton Union Infirmary, was elected Superintendent Nurse, and when her appointment was notified to her, she said she heard there had been friction, and she hoped to have the support and help of the Board in trying to prevent it in the future.

The Board has not yet called for the resignation of the Vice-Chairman, as advised by the jury in their verdict at the inquest on Miss Phipps.

It is inconceivable that any nurse should be so ignorant, as well as so casual, as to place a pillow over the mouth of a baby to stop its crying while she attended to other cases. Yet this was actually done by Nurse Elsie Coddington, night nurse in charge of the children's ward at the Chesterfield and North Derbyshire Hospital, as transpired at the subsequent inquest on this seven-months-old baby, which was awaiting an operation for hernia, and was found dead in bed. The nurse admitted that "her attention was concentrated on the most serious case in the ward . . . and she quite forgot about the pillow."

The temporary resident house surgeon—Dr. Lionel Sutcliffe—who made a *post-mortem* examination, stated that from the appearance of the lungs, and the right side of the heart, he was of opinion that the child died from asphyxia, but the condition of the thymus gland, which was enlarged, made it difficult to say. The nurse may think herself fortunate that she escaped with a well-deserved censure, the Coroner telling her that she had been guilty of a most dangerous procedure, and he hoped the case would be a lesson to her.

But that will not bring the baby back to life.

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