

no justification for so doing. Our readers would laugh to scorn the idea of a Hospital where the resident head, who was responsible to the Visiting Staff for the lives of the patients, was absolutely ignorant of all medical or nursing knowledge; they know well that, in places where there are no House Doctors, extraordinary care is always taken in the selection of a Matron of wide experience and tried trustworthiness. Yet it appears to be the fact that, just as any woman can term herself a Trained Nurse, so any one can open a Nursing Home, however innocent she may be of the most elementary nursing knowledge. We have no means of knowing whether it is a common proceeding, but two correspondents, from two different parts of the country, tell us of two worthy people—one a cook, and the other the wife of "a seafaring gentleman"—who started lodging-houses, and failing to obtain custom, found ruin imminent. The happy thought occurred to each to call her house a Nursing Home, and, apparently, both have prospered ever since. That such a state of affairs should be possible, we have no hesitation in saying, is a grave scandal, most unfair to Trained Nurses, and cruelly unjust to the public. We cannot—and we say it with the greatest regret—hold medical men altogether free from blame that Home Hospitals, managed by unprofessional people, continue to exist. Doctors would repudiate the idea of the Matron of a general Hospital being an untrained person, and yet they will treat their paying patients for the most varied diseases, and under the most critical conditions, in a Nursing Home where there is no resident medical man, and of the management of which they probably know little, except that the responsible head of the establishment knows nothing—of nursing. We are led to believe that, to a large extent, it is due to mere inadvertence on their part. Patients, for example, upon whom they are to operate, ask whether they may go into this, that, or the other Home, of which they have heard a little, or which they have seen much advertised. The Doctor may know nothing either for or against the place, and probably consents; and in his busy life, as long as his patient seems comfortable, and matters seem to be progressing favourably, it perhaps never occurs to him to inquire critically into its organisation; while patients—for the most part ignorant of what good Nursing is, and of what a Hospital ought to be—accept whatever is done—or left undone—for them, gratefully, as the best

and most appropriate treatment for their case. But the principle is radically wrong, and as such we earnestly protest against it.

Out of this, incidentally, has arisen a very striking fact. We have said that the present competition of unskilled workers is as unfair to Trained Nurses who are managing Homes as it is, clearly, to Trained Nurses in any other field of work. Registration will protect the latter, and will clearly react also as a protection for the former. How keenly this is appreciated by the untrained Home Superintendent is evidenced by a fact to which several of our correspondents have drawn attention—that these ladies are numbered amongst the very keenest opponents of Registration. We only mention this suggestive fact *en passant*, as we learn that public attention will shortly be called specifically to the real grounds of opposition to this measure, and this will then, doubtless, receive its due share of notice.

But the great importance of the principle involved, is made plain when we consider what are the direct effects of the management of a Home Hospital being in the hands of a person—however well-meaning and entirely anxious to do her duty—who knows nothing, either of Nurses or Nursing. She must be entirely dependent on her workers. She has, therefore, no right in any sense, to the title of Superintendent, for she cannot supervise those who presumably know more than she does. Her subordinates, again, are practically independent of her, because, not only will she, of her own knowledge, be quite unable to select the best Nurses, but such as she does obtain—by second-hand advice—will, as professional women, naturally decline to recognise her authority or judgment in Nursing matters. In other words, in such an Institution there can be neither discipline nor supervision; it is not a Hospital in any sense of the word, and the patients are not obtaining the advantages which they sought and for which they pay. But the evil does not end there, unfortunately. The best class of Nurses will not work under such conditions, because such an Institution is nothing but a glorified lodging-house, and therefore only inferior, semi-trained, or altogether ignorant, women are found in such places. Then, again, the Staff is generally inadequate. We have an authenticated case before us in which there were only two Nurses for ten patients, most of the attendance being done by the domestic servants. An insufficient Staff is exactly what might be anticipated where the Superintendent is entirely

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*previous page*

*next page*