

# Nursing <sup>THE</sup> Record.

EVERY SATURDAY,  
ONE PENNY.

The Hospital World.

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PROFICIT, DEFICIT."

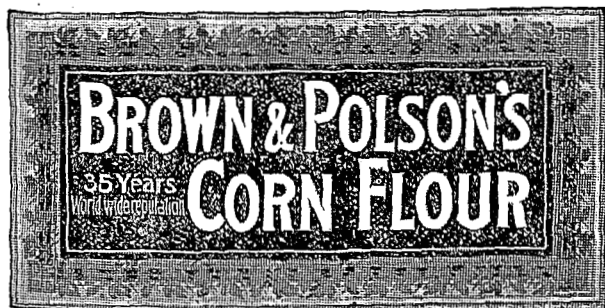
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Editorial.

THE ABUSE OF HOSPITALS.—I.

THIS is a serious question for the public as well as for medical practitioners, and for the charitable, by whose donations Hospitals are maintained. It is said, with growing emphasis, that, especially with regard to their out-patient departments, Hospital charity is terribly abused. And the fact that the London Hospitals last year are asserted to have treated gratuitously more than one million out-patients, certainly goes far to give support to the assertion. We are, indeed, aware, as most professional people are, that this figure and the consequent statement that one-fifth of the population of London is habitually attending the out-patient departments of the Hospitals, is ridiculously wide of the truth. Because, in the first place, these figures merely represent the number of patients treated during twelve months at all these Institutions combined, and it is inferred that they, therefore, represent precisely that number of individuals. This is a fallacy which can be destroyed in a moment by the remembrance of two simple facts. Firstly, that, at a considerable number of Hospitals, cases are "renewed," that is to say, after a certain length of attendance, a patient has to procure a fresh letter of recommendation, or in some other way is entered upon the books as a new case, and consequently counts, to all intents and purposes, during the course of the year, perhaps, as two or three separate cases; secondly, it is notorious that the class of people who attend out-patient rooms, especially those of Special Hospitals, migrate incessantly from Institution to Institution, at each one of which, of course, they are counted as one or more new cases. It is by no means uncommon

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