

more than doubtful whether, on the lines suggested, it would be either successful or useful.

It would appear that some twenty-one years ago Sir Henry Burdett started the "Home Hospitals' Association," and the initiation and progress of that scheme possesses many characteristic features of its promoter. It commenced with a tremendous flourish of trumpets and succeeded in obtaining some £15,000 from the charitable public. Apparently, Sir Henry Burdett did not contribute anything to the funds, but he assumed the title, as usual, of "Founder" of the Association. In brief, the Association proposed to found precisely such a hospital for middle-class patients as is now again suggested; and the results which it obtained are, therefore of much importance and interest in enabling one to estimate the prospects of success of any similar suggestion.

The *Medical Times* points out that after ten years' existence, that is to say in 1888, Sir Henry Burdett's Association "had premises, etc., valued at about £12,000, with £1,200 in cash and other effects; but against these there were mortgages and debts amounting to £7,200; so that out of the original £15,000 there were less than £6,000 remaining. Where that other £9,000 had gone to we are not aware, and we have never heard any explanation vouchsafed. At any rate, the resulting institution is at present known as Fitzroy House. It was ostensibly started for the assistance of the middle classes, and in order to provide them at small cost with the comforts of a home combined with the advantages of a hospital. It is needless to say that, beyond the disappearance of some £9,000 the institution in question has totally failed in its original object."

Those who have studied the progress of other schemes on the same foundation will not be surprised at the above facts and figures. At any rate, it is certain that a scheme for providing hospitals for the middle classes has been tried with every chance of success, and that it has completely failed in its object. This statement is of course open to the criticism that under better management the plan might have been successful; but dealing with things as they are, the facts are irrefutable.

We are convinced, moreover, that the expenses of a Home Hospital are not generally realised, and that the chances of the success of such an institution are more problematical than is usually believed. The two things essential for success in a Nursing Home are

that the scale of charges should be remunerative, and that the medical support of the institution should be great enough to keep at least three quarters of the available accommodation always occupied. There is, therefore, much to be said in favour of a scheme propounded by the Incorporated Medical Practitioners' Association, that the medical practitioners in any district should combine together to start and manage such a Home Hospital for their own district, employing its bedroom accommodation for the reception of such of their patients as are unable to obtain efficient nursing attendance in their own homes. This suggestion appears to us to be much more practical and to offer a greater probability of success than any other of which we have yet heard. And we are quite confident that a semi-charitable, semi-self-supporting hospital for the middle classes would either follow the example of Fitzroy House, and adopt the ordinary charges of a Nursing Home, or it would fail to attract medical patronage or self-respecting patients.

Annotations.

UNSKILLED MIDWIFERY.

At an inquest recently held at Guy's Hospital on the bodies of some newly-born infants who died a few hours after birth, and whose mothers were attended by students from Guy's and St. Thomas's Hospitals, the coroner, Mr. S. F. Langham, protested against a system which made such inquests possible. The large unnecessary expense was caused by the fact that unqualified men were sent to confinement cases. He thought that such large institutions, as Guy's and St. Thomas's, should employ qualified men to attend confinement cases.

We heartily concur in these remarks, as we consider that no one who is *in statu pupillare* should be permitted to attend confinement cases without supervision, and the fact that this is "the system at all large hospitals," as stated by Dr. Alford, obstetric house physician at St. Thomas' Hospital, is somewhat of a scandal, and one to which we have already drawn attention.

The amount of practical midwifery required of medical students is so small that for the protection of the public, whom they will subsequently attend, as well as of the poor women from whom they gain their experience, it is important that this knowledge should be obtained under the direct supervision and instruction of a qualified medical man.

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