

The Nursing Record

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EDITORIAL.

WE once more revert to the interesting and important subject to which we have already devoted such considerable attention—the charges which should be made by Hospitals for their Private Nurses. When we commenced to consider this matter, we wrote that it was "one of the greatest possible importance to any Institution conducting a Nursing Home; next to its Private Nurses; next to its Staff Nurses; next to other public and private Nursing Institutions and their employées; and lastly to the richer public also." We may recall attention to the fact that the question was raised in these columns by a thoughtful Article by Miss Dannatt, who desired that Hospitals should supply Private Nurses at lower charges than are now generally enforced.

We have proved that no Hospital could commence a Private Nursing Department by asking lower prices for its workers than are found to be commercially profitable by other Homes, because otherwise the scheme might end in financial failure, and monies confided to the Committee of

the Institution for the care of the sick poor would thus have to be employed for a widely different purpose. Furthermore, that if the scheme proved successful, and all the money expended in preliminary expenses were paid back, even then no Hospital could materially reduce its Nursing charges; for that would, we proved, inevitably result in an ever-increasing demand for its Nurses, till at last the Institution itself would become merely an adjunct to one vast Nursing Establishment. Then we showed, upon the other hand, that once the Home was fairly floated, free from debt, and producing an income in excess of expenditure, the surplus funds might be invested to form a Pension Fund for old and tried employées of the Institution, and how that procedure would improve every branch of its Nursing, and raise its whole reputation, therefore, with the general public.

It only remains for us, therefore, to show how the question of lowering the charges for its Private Nursing, by any given large Hospital, would affect other public and private Nursing Institutions and their employées, and through these the richer classes of the public. Let us imagine, therefore, for the sake of the argument, that the Committee of a large and flourishing Hospital reduced the charges to be paid for its Private Nurses to the lowest amount at which expenses could be cleared—sixteen shillings per week per Nurse; this would allow to each Nurse a fixed—not increasable—salary of £30 per annum, with uniform, and would require from her constant work for fifty weeks in each year.

Then arises at once these important questions: Could the Hospital maintain a first-class staff of Nurses permanently attached to its Home under these conditions? and would the class for whom Miss Dannatt pleads so well—the lower-middle stratum of society—be any better able to pay these charges, with the many other contingent expenses of a Nurse's presence in the house, than they now are to meet the amounts at present demanded?

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