

Annotations.

FAIR PLAY.

WE must once more protest against the injustice of those persons who write to the public papers, and condemn in a wholesale manner institutions, some of which are doing admirable work. We refer to the letters which have recently appeared in the *Morning Post* with regard to Private Nursing Homes. That there is ample ground for complaint, and that all that has been said is true, we entirely believe, but we hold that the institutions complained of should be mentioned by name. A general indictment is quite useless, and is calculated to injure institutions which are undoubtedly doing excellent work. We have for some time been collecting information concerning the management of Private Nursing Homes, and we are of opinion that most of the evils complained of arise from their being in many instances owned by unprofessional persons. These persons are compelled to add to their income by some means, and it appears to them more aristocratic, and also more remunerative, to preside over nursing homes than to keep boarding houses. The fault that they are led to do so is not theirs; human nature will always be human nature, and in this age of arrant snobocracy there is very much virtue in a fashionable fad. The real evil, we think, lies in the fact that medical men send their patients into homes which are owned by persons who know nothing whatever of the work they undertake. If this were not done, unprofessional nursing institutions could not exist for a day. In so doing, therefore, medical men incur a very serious responsibility, and the public are beginning to be alive to the fact that grave abuses exist in many institutions, and will not continue to place that implicit faith in medical recommendations which they formerly did, but will inquire into the management of these homes for themselves, before they enter them, or place relations in them. It is sometimes asserted in defence of the homes, owned by untrained proprietors, that these persons employ trained nurses. We must point out, therefore, that this fact does not give a home a professional status, such nurses being the paid servants of the proprietor, and consequently bound to carry out her instructions; and furthermore, it is well known that the best class of nurses will not place themselves in the false position necessitated by working under untrained persons. The object of untrained persons in starting nursing homes is undoubtedly to make as much money as possible out of them, and hence scandals are likely to

arise, as in the instance recently brought before the notice of the public with reference to Ings House. We are aware of another Nursing Home where the proprietress is the widow of a medical man who was connected with a London hospital. Many of his former colleagues send their private patients to the home owned by this lady, where they are charged at the rate of ten guineas a week, and, beyond this, two guineas for the services of a nurse which they pay direct to a nurse. Having had some years' experience in the management of a private nursing home we have no hesitation in saying that the public is willing to pay a fair price for first-class professional attendance, but it naturally objects to paying professional prices for unprofessional work. That those homes which are managed by nurses are needed, and appreciated, is evidenced by the fact that the most distinguished medical men constantly avail themselves of the opportunities afforded by them, of placing their patients in the best possible conditions; but that many homes which are not conducted by professional persons are sources of public danger, and should cease to exist, is beyond dispute; and the sooner the public are made widely aware of this fact, and led to inquire into the credentials of the proprietors of these institutions the better, both for themselves and for the nursing profession. We reiterate, therefore, that we consider it a public duty on the part of those who have been defrauded, and who have paid for skilled attendance which they have not had, and for proper food which has not been supplied, that they should expose the fraudulent institutions of which they complain, by publishing their names.

A NEW QUALIFICATION FOR REGISTRATION.

THE duties of asylum attendants seem multifarious. At an inquest recently held before Mr. Brighthouse, Lancashire coroner, on the body of a patient of the Shaftesbury House Asylum, Formby, who suffered from melancholia, and who was found dead on Formby beach, evidence was given by an attendant that he "*was mowing* by order of the head attendant when he missed the deceased patient." The asylum officials could not give any explanation of the patient's escape. The standard of training received by attendants, in an asylum where "*mowing*" is a duty which is combined with the care of melancholic patients, must be left to the imagination. We presume that an ability to "*mow*" will be a necessary qualification for registration by the Royal British Nurses' Association under the new Bye-laws.

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