

with the discourteous treatment they received that they have absolutely refused to allow their daughters to belong to a staff of nurses of which the head appeared so wanting in good breeding. We have heard, again, of a diffident visitor, who appeared at the door of a ward, being received by a shout of "What d'you want?" from a nurse at tea in the ward kitchen, who did not consider it worth her while to move from her chair to show courtesy to a stray stranger. A word to the wise is sufficient. The sooner members of the nursing profession amend their ways, as regards the treatment of strangers, the more creditable it will be to them.

UNPROFESSIONAL CONTROL.

THE number of Nursing Homes which are being opened for the reception of private patients is quite phenomenal. We regret the fact, as the natural result of keen competition in any department of work is to lower the fees which can be commanded. Should this happen in the case of nursing homes there is no doubt that the difficulty of maintaining the high standard at present attained by some nursing homes will be extreme, as the proprietors will find it unremunerative, upon a lower scale of fees, to incur the great expense necessary to maintain a large staff of highly-trained nurses and domestics, and the tendency will consequently be to accept a lower standard.

In the interests of the sick this would be a condition greatly to be deplored; we are, therefore, the more sorry to see that a lay contemporary advocates the opening of nursing homes, as a means of livelihood to women, who have had no professional training to qualify them for the position. This advice is, we think, unsound to the persons so advised, who will find upon embarking upon such an undertaking that if they desire to attain a recognised position in the nursing, or any other, profession, they must qualify themselves for it by hard work; and, secondly, it is obviously unfair on the public to permit them to enter homes managed by persons who, having no knowledge of nursing themselves, cannot possibly adequately superintend their subordinates. It cannot be too strongly or too frequently impressed upon the public that they should invariably inquire before entering nursing homes whether the management is in the hands of competent persons—of persons, that is to say, who are qualified for the position by holding at least a certificate of three years' hospital training.

Medical Matters.

DIPHTHERIA.



THE fact that the fatality of Diphtheria appears to be much less now than it was formerly has attracted considerable attention in this country, and many arguments have been advanced to explain it. A favourite assertion is that the diminution in the mortality is due to the serum treatment, and this has been supported by the statistics which have been published by the Metropolitan Fever Hospitals concerning the success of these injections, especially in acute cases, and in the earliest stage of the disease. It is possible, however, that to an even greater extent the diminished mortality is due to the better health conditions of the population, and so to the fact that when Diphtheria epidemics do occur they are less virulent in type than was formerly the case. Some twenty years ago the writer had the opportunity of observing the progress of Diphtheria epidemics in Paris, in Leipzig, and in London. In Paris, the form was that to which French physicians were then accustomed, and it was characterised by its rapid course and great mortality. In Leipzig, in the lower and more crowded parts of the town, the same conditions were observable, but in the outskirts the mortality was less, and the cases on the whole were less severe. In London, there was a most marked difference in the type, and the patients exhibited less extreme symptoms, while the mortality was much lower. The improvements in the public health in the three countries, since then, have had much effect, not only in the prevention of this disease, but also in the severity of its form. In connection with this, it is interesting to learn that in Berlin it has been proved that the mortality from Diphtheria has fallen by nearly one-half, and that this result has been more than attained in other German towns, as shown by the conclusive fact that whereas their death-rate from this disease from 1886 to 1894 was 106 per 100,000, during the last three years it has only been 44. Now, inasmuch as this remarkable fall cannot have been due either to accidental circumstances, or be entirely independent of treatment, there are strong grounds for believing that the serum treatment has proved very valuable. It is too soon to dogmatise

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