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**Editorial.**

THE WHOLE NURSING QUESTION.

WE observe with much satisfaction that, at the Annual Meeting of the supporters of the Norwood Cottage Hospital, of which Mr. Tritton, M.P., is President, Dr. Galton referred to the long hours, unnecessarily hard work, and bad feeding of nurses in some hospitals. He was of opinion that some public man, with a reputation like their President, should bring this matter before Parliament.

Mr. Tritton said that from his own knowledge he was perfectly satisfied that the statement made was not exaggerated, and the matter was one which should be looked into. If suitable questions were submitted to him he would be very pleased to put them in the House of Commons.

We welcome Mr. Tritton's statement as the need for nursing legislation is every day more obvious, and is, indeed, rapidly becoming a national question because the condition of nursing, owing to the lack of such legislation, is becoming a national scandal. There is no doubt that the hours on duty, and the conditions under which nurses work, in many hospitals and

poor law infirmaries need revision. In some of the latter institutions especially the proportion of patients to nurses is so large as to make real nursing quite impossible. But this is only one item in a large area, and before Parliament legislates for nurses it will, we believe, be necessary to hold an inquiry into the whole nursing question. It would have been well had this course been adopted in 1891 after the inquiry into the Metropolitan Hospitals. We urged it in 1898 after new Bye-laws had been forced upon the members of the Royal British Nurses' Association by the Hon. officers in a packed meeting. Many members of Parliament were then prepared to support the demand for such an inquiry, and it is noteworthy that it was shirked by this association, and that by the influence of one of its members Mr. Balfour was informed that this course was unnecessary. Events are, however, rapidly proving that such an inquiry was not only necessary but imperative.

Mr. Burdett-Coutts' revelations as to the condition of our sick and wounded in South Africa have stirred the national conscience, and everything still points steadily to the need for a Parliamentary inquiry into the work and condition of nurses.

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