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Editorial.

THE MANAGEMENT OF HOME HOSPITALS.

The organisation and management of Home Hospitals is a matter of considerable importance to the community, as it is becoming increasingly usual for medical practitioners to send their patients into such institutions in cases requiring operation, and in other serious illnesses. The abuses connected with many nursing homes, run as financial speculations, and affording no guarantee to the public as to the efficiency of the nursing provided, together with the high charges frequently made by such institutions, have somewhat discredited even thoroughly reliable homes in public estimation, which is greatly to be regretted, as they are a great boon to the sick.

An attempt is now being made to provide accommodation for paying patients, on a scale hitherto unattempted, by a company registered as "The Medical and Surgical Nursing Homes, Ltd.," one object of which is "to purchase or acquire, in London or elsewhere, any premises which may be deemed suitable for the establishment of Private Hospitals, Nursing Homes, or Surgical Institutions, and to establish Nursing Homes or other Medical and Surgical Institutions, and for other purposes."

To this is also apparently added the object of acquiring all professional and commercial businesses directly and indirectly associated with the maintenance of such Homes; thus object (d) of the company permits it "To purchase or otherwise acquire, and to carry on the business or businesses of Physicians, Surgeons, Dentists, Chemists, Druggists, Instrument Makers, Cabinet Makers, Upholsterers, Furnishers, Glass Manufacturers, Storekeepers, and any and every other business whatever." Apparently the aim of the company is to act as a universal provider to the sick public, as well as to obtain for the shareholders a dividend of 7½ per cent. per annum on the capital for the time being paid up on deferred and ordinary shares, and any balance of surplus profits obtainable after provision is made for a reserve fund.

It is unnecessary to point out that in the case of a company formed on an avowedly commercial basis the professional standards maintained need safeguarding if efficiency is to be secured.

With the intention of carrying into effect the first object of the company, some large premises have been acquired in London in Mandeville Place and Wigmore Street, W., where it is proposed to open a nursing home containing eventually 200 beds, where patients will be received in separate rooms at inclusive terms ranging from £2 2s. to £4 4s. a week for nursing, attendance, and food.

Home Hospital management is a subject in which we take much interest, and in which we have had considerable practical experience.

Having studied the prospectus issued by the company above mentioned, we have no hesitation in saying that its most urgent need is expert nursing advice and assistance, and that it is most desirable for trained nurses, with special experience in the branch of nursing work concerned, to be added to the Board of Management, which at present consists of a barrister, a distinguished Indian officer, and two well-known Colonial knights, one of whom holds a medical diploma. The efficient management of a Home of this kind is not only a most expensive but also a highly technical work. For this latter reason, even able financiers will fail to estimate accurately the probable expenditure involved, and one instance will suffice to emphasise the justice of this criticism.

In estimating the cost of laundry expenses annually for an institution containing sixty patients, and the necessary nursing and domestic staff, this is placed at £100 per annum, that is to say, at less than £1 per person per annum! No one with the slightest knowledge of the amount of fresh linen required by the sick could have fallen into such an egregious blunder. Certainly not less than £600 should be set aside for this purpose. Another item is "Cost of management, office, salaries, Matron, nurses, men servants, &c.," for

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)