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Editorial.

PRIVATE NURSING HOMES.

The necessity for some public supervision and control of Private Nursing Homes is not only generally admitted by the nursing profession in this country, but is arousing, to an increasing degree, public attention and comment. An article, which appears in the current issue of a monthly contemporary upon this subject, demands legislation to secure the proper inspection of all private hospitals. It is, however, written entirely from the standpoint of a layman, and therefore some of the strongest arguments in favour of reform are not advanced, whilst it is equally evident that the question has forced itself upon the attention of the writer in consequence of a few isolated facts which have been brought to his notice. For example, he lays most stress upon a case in which thirteen more or less bedridden and helpless people were inmates of one small house, the sole attendance given to them being provided by the proprietor—a gardener—his wife and a child of thirteen.

By the term Nursing Home, we understand a private house into which patients are admitted either for medical attendance or for surgical operations, and to whom nursing care is given by the superintendent and nurses working directly under her. In London and other large towns, there are many such Homes, admirably conducted and deservedly high in public and professional esteem; but it is equally impossible to deny that there are many others which deserve, and some which from time to time receive, public condemnation. Unfortunately, however, the innocent suffer with the guilty, and so many scandals have recently occurred in connection with nurs-

ing homes that both the public and the medical profession are becoming seriously disquieted on the subject, and reforms are needed for the protection of well-managed homes from undeserved suspicion, as well as for the elimination of homes which can only be described as a public danger. Of course, a Private Nursing Home should, like a public hospital, be personally supervised by a thoroughly trained nurse; only thoroughly trained nurses should be employed under her directions in attending upon the patients; and the former should be in sufficient numbers to enable each patient to receive, both day and night, all necessary care and attention. Unfortunately, as our readers are aware, these, which should be cardinal principles, are violated in a considerable number of so-called Nursing Homes. It is well-known that there are many of these institutions commenced and carried on, merely as commercial speculations, by men as well as women who possess no knowledge or experience of nursing matters. It is notorious that in many of these the attendants have not received a proper education for the responsible duties they are expected to fulfil. One witness told the Select Committee of the House of Commons how he had found one of his patients being attended to by a woman whom, the previous day, he had observed sweeping the stairs in a servant's dress, and who, in fact, was a domestic servant placed in charge of a dangerous case. It is notorious that no small part of the opposition to the Registration of Nurses has originated in the past from the proprietors of Nursing Homes, who realised that their profits would be seriously diminished if they were compelled to employ thoroughly-trained nurses instead of the semi-trained

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