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EDITORIAL.

PRIVATE NURSES.—II.

UNDER this heading we last week advised those of our readers who might think of joining the Nurses' Mutual Registry to ask certain questions. To these, as indeed we fully expected, it appears that no reply has yet been vouchsafed. So far as the curtain is yet uplifted for anyone, we will therefore give our readers some power of seeing behind the scenes. The sole excuse for the formation of this Society, as we explained last week, rests on the well-known fact that Private Nurses earn much more than—if they work for Institutions—they receive. But it was clearly proved that, on the one hand, they derive many advantages from connection with a well-known Nursing Home, which they could not possibly obtain if they were at work on their own responsibility. And, on the other hand, that the day is past when Nurses can be "sweated" at their employers' caprice, and that there is the strongest probability that every year will in future see more Institutions treating their Nurses more like partners in business who must be liberally dealt with, and less like servants, from whom as much work must be evolved as possible.

Still the *raison d'être* of this new Society is that few Institutions treat their employées thus fairly at the present time, so that it is incumbent on individual Private Nurses to endeavour to improve their own position. It consequently occurred to a gentleman who has made several previous attempts to pose as a Medical man or a Trained Nurse—it seems a little uncertain which he really considers himself to be, or for which rôle he is the less fitted—that the present would be a favourable occasion to produce a little Comedy, in which, for the present, he would modestly take the prompter's part. We do not, however, imagine that the rehearsals will be sufficiently successful to induce him to put his name on the bills, in future, in small capitals—the type for which he has a rooted predilection—and so we may leave him behind the curtain.

In a provincial paper some few weeks ago the "puff preliminary" of this little play appeared as follows:—"Nurses are forming themselves into a mutual association for the supply of Nurses to private cases, Nurses taking their own earnings, and only paying a five per cent. charge to the central office, to cover the working expenses. A friend has kindly guaranteed the initial expenses of the society." To the uninitiated lay mind of our provincial contemporary this sounded very promising. But the inherent difficulties of the programme, and the dangers to those who might be persuaded to take part in it, become immediately apparent to professional people.

A number of Nurses of course at once made inquiries, and the information given to them proves incontestably what the veriest tyro in Nursing matters could have predicted. First, the inquirers were told, in an airy way, that a house would be taken, into which the Nurses would be admitted, on the payment of about seventeen shillings a week for their board and lodging, when not at work; that a gentleman was going to give £200 to start the scheme, and that Nurses would only have to pay five per cent. upon

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