

THE BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING

WITH WHICH IS INCORPORATED
THE NURSING RECORD
EDITED BY MRS BEDFORD FENWICK

No. 1,115.

SATURDAY, AUGUST 14, 1909.

XLIII.

Editorial.

THE REGISTRATION OF NURSING HOMES.

The British Medical Association, at its Annual Meeting last week, devoted some attention to the question of Nursing Homes. At the meeting of the Association last year, it was pointed out that there was no accepted definition of "A Nursing Home," and the matter was referred to the Council. It appears that three Committees were consulted during the year, and that, finally, the following definition was drawn up:—"A Nursing Home is an Institution in which patients are received for medical care, under the attendance of medical practitioners selected by themselves, and where the patients are responsible to the Home for charges for maintenance and nursing, and to the medical practitioners for their fees."

This definition was accepted by the Annual Meeting, and so far as it goes it is, of course, quite accurate; but all our readers will observe that it leaves untouched several points which it would be advisable that such a definition should include. For example, the question of the proprietor of a Nursing Home being a professional person; and the even more important question of such a home being licensed for the purpose and open to inspection, might well be included in any definition of such a Home.

For the moment, we have only space to refer to the latter point. The Select Committee of the House of Commons, which inquired into the whole question of Registration of Nurses, concluded its Report by recommending that all Nursing Homes should be licensed for that purpose by the County or Borough Councils, and should be inspected from time to time in order to ascertain that they were maintained in a state of efficiency, and that they conformed

to the conditions of their license. With these recommendations, all those who desire reforms in the Nursing profession are in cordial agreement; because they are well aware of the many and serious evils which at present exist in so-called Nursing Homes.

It is significant, therefore, to observe that several of the speakers at the British Medical Association had evidently not realised the grave reasons which exist for such a reform. One gentleman went so far as to consider that "nothing could be more objectionable than a Nursing Home being open to inspection. How could a well-to-do patient be asked to go into an institution where a gentleman in blue might be running in at any moment." The speaker was evidently unaware that an inspection of such a Home could only be made by a medical man or a nurse, and that a policeman would be scarcely fitted, by his training, to investigate sanitary conditions, and whether or not proper provision had been made for the nursing of the sick in such an institution. The question as to the admission of lunatics into Nursing Homes, which was raised by another speaker, is one which is already provided for by the existing Lunacy Acts. But all who are acquainted with the subject are aware that many so-called Nursing Homes at present are entirely unsuited in their sanitary and domestic arrangements for the admission of serious medical or surgical cases; and, moreover, that, in too many of them, the supply of trained nurses is regarded as a matter of economy for the proprietor rather than one of efficiency, comfort or safety for the patient.

We have been content to wait for the reform of Nursing Homes, until the Registration of Nurses was in force; because we are well aware that the effect of that measure on such Institutions will be immense and immediate.

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)