

NURSING ECHOES.

*** Communications (duly authenticated with name and address, not for publication, but as evidence of good faith) are especially invited for these columns.*

THERE is a capital article in the *Lady's Pictorial* this week on "Trained Nurses and the Public." It quietly attacks the pamphlet issued by Miss Luckes, which has already been so completely pulverised, but which has been so useful in drawing public attention to the B.N.A., and to the unfair opposition to which it is exposed, that I will not say another word about it, except in gratitude for such unexpected results. However, the article to which I allude seems to be referring to a pamphlet published by Miss Wood, which I have not seen, but to which I hope I shall soon have an opportunity of drawing my readers' attention, entitled "What the British Nurses' Association is, and what it seeks to do for Nurses." I presume the old manifesto issued by the B.N.A. with this same title is not meant, for I heard at the time it appeared that this was written by a well-known Surgeon.

MR. EDITOR has asked me from time to time to call attention in these columns to the awful results which so often follow ignorant Midwives' work. The following annotation from the *Lancet* of last week may well be quoted by those who are endeavouring to obtain Registration of Midwives, and be most earnestly commended to the attention of those who, blind to the signs of the times, are making such futile efforts to prevent this measure of protection for the public being carried into effect. I see, by-the-bye, that the possible explanation of the harm done by the woman referred to below is given in a letter to the Editor, which appeared in the same issue of our contemporary, from Dr. Russell M. Talbot, the Medical Officer of Health for Bow and Bromley, in which he says: "The Midwife was suffering from specific disease in the tertiary stage, and about the 28th of July had a large piece of loose necrosed bone—the stench from which was abominable—removed from the roof of her mouth. This bone had been exposed for at least a month. Had she been fidgeting this piece of bone about with her finger and conveyed septic material to her patient?"

"MR. WYNNE BAXTER investigated, at the Town Hall, Limehouse, the circumstances of the death of Eleanor Bumforth, who was confined on Sunday, September 8; became ill with diarrhoea, &c., on Wednesday, September 11; and died on Friday, September 13. She was the daughter of

a Midwife, who said she did not deliver her daughter, though it was admitted that she came and examined her, and according to the evidence of Mr. Talbot, remained with her for about an hour. The serious part of the investigation was the tracing of six cases of death in child-bed, from about July 24, all of which had been attended more or less by the Midwife. On July 24 she attended Mrs. Sparrow, of Copenhagen Street. She died. A Medical practitioner was called in, and told the Midwife she ought not to go out for a fortnight. But she attended Mrs. Ward on August 1, who complained the following day of pain in the stomach and vomiting, and died on August 5; and so on with other cases, all remarkably alike."

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"THERE was an inquest on Mrs. Ward, at which the Midwife was warned by the Coroner to desist at least a fortnight. Mr. Talbot—who was called to the last case—attributed the cases to some constitutional fault in the Midwife, who had diseased bone in the mouth. The only notice of the fatalities and of the various warnings which she took was to wash her clothes in Condy's Fluid, and to go away for a week, from August 7th. When a patient sent for her on the 14th she replied that she ought not to go; but the patient saying that she had no fear, as people had to die when their time came, and not before, she went. In the end the Coroner spoke very gravely to her, and said that if she attended a case within three months he would have her committed for manslaughter. It must be admitted that he dealt leniently with her, and that her conduct was exceedingly blameable. One of our contemporaries heads the inquest, 'A Strange Epidemic in Limehouse.' But there is nothing really strange about it but the persistence of the woman in going about spreading disease after both the Coroner, and at least two Medical men, had fully warned her. It is one more and very sad illustration of the state of Midwives' Midwifery."

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"It is discreditable to the Home Office that legislation is so long delayed, insisting on some proofs of education and intelligence in Midwives. Until such legislation is earnestly set about we must consider our legislators as much to blame as the ignorant women who think to disinfect their persons by merely washing their clothes in Condy's Fluid. One of our contemporaries seems anxious about Doctors and their personal disinfection. We can assure it that the disinfection of obstetricians has become one of the fine arts, and has reached such perfection that even in Lying-in Hospitals septic mortality is almost abolished."

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