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No. 126.

THURSDAY, AUGUST 28th, 1890.

VOL. 5.

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EDITORIAL.

THE REGISTRATION OF MIDWIVES.—III.

WE must now revert to the subject of the Registration of Midwives, which we commenced to discuss some ten weeks ago, but which we were obliged to set aside in order to consider more weighty matters. Our readers may perhaps remember that we formerly pointed out two facts little known or little appreciated in relation to this question. Firstly, that inasmuch as it is only the poorer classes who generally employ Midwives, the remuneration obtainable by these workers is small and precarious, and that therefore there is little inducement for Midwives as a class to spend much time and money in obtaining a high degree of skill and efficiency in the calling before commencing to practise. Secondly, that for some years a quiet movement has been going on in the direction of thoroughly trained Nurses becoming highly educated in the theory and practice of midwifery, so that now a large number are at work who combine the work of the Midwife with that of the Monthly Nurse, to the great advantage of their patients, and of their own pockets. And the many

communications which we have since received from all parts of the country confirm us in the belief which we then expressed, that in all probability this movement being merely indicative that many individual Nurses had discovered a want on the part of the public for a highly skilled Midwife-Nurse, the tendency would be for this combination of work to be more and more commonly adopted in years to come. And as it is morally certain that all these highly trained women will be Registered Nurses, the question arises as to the necessity for any special Registration of Midwives.

Now, far be it from us to be as illogical as those who do in one breath denounce the Registration of Nurses, and with the next advocate the Registration of Plumbers. We have consistently and steadfastly upheld the urgent necessity for the enforcement of the Registration of Nurses, because they are skilled workers. And upon that ground also we firmly approve of the proposal to register Midwives. But the latter is a work of infinitely greater difficulty, and even of infinitely greater danger, than the former. We recognise as keenly as anyone the enormous harm which may be wrought by an ignorant or careless Midwife, although we are fain to believe that the somewhat hysterical ladies who are the chief movers in the demand for Registration of Midwives, can have little or no practical knowledge of the vast difficulties of practical legislation upon the subject. Admitting then frankly and freely that Midwives should be registered and placed under proper control, we are bound, after a very careful examination of the Bill recently introduced into Parliament at the instance of the Midwives' Institute, to state our conviction that a more ridiculous and utterly mischievous measure has rarely been brought before the notice of the Legislature. Nay, more; we believe that had

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