

disease from one eye to another by means of discs is often run is my reason for calling attention to this.

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How important an item Nursing Lectures are now held to be in popular technical education is well shown by the following list of County Councils which have arranged for courses of such lectures in their respective districts, namely, in Berkshire, Buckingham, Chester County, Chester County Borough, Cumberland, Derby County, Isle of Ely County, Essex, Gloucester, Hereford, Kent, Lancaster County, Leicester County, Middlesex County, Northumberland County, Somerset County, Sussex, Eastern Division, Warwick County, Durham, Berwick.

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THE interest in the proposed legislation for Midwives which is felt by the medical profession, is finding expression in the medical journals. It is very important that Nurses should know the views of doctors on this subject, and the following letters from so eminent an authority as the late Master of the Rotunda Hospital, Dublin, is very instructive, while Dr. SERS well represents the views of the great body of the profession who are engaged in general practice. Both these appeared in the *Lancet* last week:—

SIRS,—Permit me to point out that the writer of the annotation on the above subject, which appeared in THE LANCET of Aug. 26th, no doubt unintentionally, misrepresents my views as to the education of midwives. My evidence before the Committee may have been of no value, but how anyone who has read it and the letters from me which have appeared in the medical journals could consider me to be the defender "of ignorant midwives" amazes me. During the whole of my professional life I have been an advocate for the better training of midwives, and I do not think any master of the Rotunda Hospital ever more earnestly endeavoured to raise the standard of the education of these women than I did, and I think with some success. And in my evidence before the Committee and in the letters I have written on the subject I desired to impress on the public the necessity of increasing the facilities for the training of midwives throughout the whole empire. To be brief, I am of opinion: 1. That it is most desirable that a considerable number of women should be annually trained as midwives. 2. That to grant certificates to very imperfectly trained women would be misleading to the public and would be a public wrong. 3. That it would be impossible to educate efficiently any woman as a midwife except at some kind of mater-

nity hospital and placed under the supervision of a practitioner who could and would devote sufficient time to the duty. When I spoke of "the farce of education under a local practitioner" I had in view the possible case of the licensing body accepting certificates from "any registered practitioner," which indeed was actually proposed to be done by the Midwives' Registration Bill, and which, if it be done, will without doubt be too often a mere "farce." 4. That the examination of these women should be conducted by examiners appointed by the various universities and licensing bodies, to whom certain districts should be assigned for that purpose. 5. That the registration of all women now in practice, as proposed by the authors of the Bill, would be to inflict a grievous wrong on the poor.

I regret to say that I am compelled to reiterate that, as far as my personal experience goes, I have seen more harm done by practitioners who, though both licensed and "registered," were ignorant of midwifery, than by ignorant and illiterate women. Let me give a few instances that occur to my memory at the instant. 1. I remember three cases in which the cervix was extensively lacerated, and in one of these the vagina as well, in the attempts which were made by practitioners to force the hand into the uterus where the placenta was retained in cases of abortion. Two of these cases terminated fatally. 2. Twice have I known the blade of the forceps to be thrust through the lower segment of the uterus when it was supposed to be dilated but was not, with lamentable results. 3. I know of a case in which the intestines, which escaped through a ruptured uterus, were drawn down, they being mistaken for the membranes. These cases were all under the care of practitioners. I have never known such serious cases of malpractice to occur amongst women calling themselves midwives. Of course I can only speak of my own experience. My evidence was neither "careless" nor "extravagant," but strictly true; and if these facts would lead the licensing bodies to require a more extended knowledge of midwifery from students than they do now, great good would result. I was led, quite unpremeditatedly, to speak before the Committee of the ignorance of midwifery which was displayed by not a few registered practitioners to show that a mere smattering of knowledge, such as the proposed Midwives' Registration Bill seemed only to require, was dangerous. I fear it is useless to hope for greater attention to this important branch of medical education being required of students by the majority of the licensing bodies and Universities; they are content to send out into practice

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