

It is only during the past week that the sad death of Miss EVELINE MARIA FINCH, a Sister in a Metropolitan Hospital, is recorded from an overdose of morphia. Her sister deposed at the inquest that "she had been greatly depressed for some months over her work, because she felt the great responsibility of her post. When a death took place in her ward it seemed to prey on her mind." All those who have been Sisters amongst us can sympathise most deeply with the "overstrained nervous system" of this poor girl. How sad are the last words she addressed to her mother—"Let no one reproach me for this act; if I live as a weak-willed creature, and do more mischief, it would seem better not to be." Evidence was forthcoming that she was a most conscientious and laborious Nurse.

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AND yet again, during the past month, in one of our Metropolitan Nursing Schools, a Probationer, whose coming examination weighed upon her mind, was suddenly attacked with acute mania. I feel sure "A Sister's" letter, in the "Council" column, will meet with attention on the part of our readers.

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THE *Provincial Medical Journal* for October, which represents the opinion of a wide circle of medical practitioners in the country, devotes a "leader" to the question of the Registration of Midwives. We reprint its views, and will gladly set forth those of our readers who write with experience on the question.

"We regret very much to have to return to this subject again, but the practice of midwifery is so important and so bound up with the well-being of the people, that we must protest against the mischievous legislation attempted to be forced through the House of Commons, and endeavour to rouse the profession to united action against any Bill framed on the lines of the resolutions passed by the Select Committee. We must make our views clear. (1st) The midwife must be ended, the very name is responsible for a vast amount of the mischief done.

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(2nd) We must have a new creation of Obstetric Nurses who shall have a special training of not less than three years, and who shall be qualified to attend an ordinary case of labour. When we consider how long it takes the average male to obtain a practical knowledge of Midwifery and to become an efficient *accoucheur*, we are asking for a very *modicum* of time for the education of the Obstetric Nurse. At present midwifery is taught at certain places in six weeks, three months, six months. Certificates, diplomas, are granted, for a price, by certain Institutions, and Midwives are sent from these so-called training schools to the great danger of the parturient women of this country. Without any knowledge of Nursing these diplomated midwives assume the garb of the trained Nurse, and with a little knowledge they take upon themselves responsibilities which would be less lightly undertaken if their knowledge was more extended. We know not which was more dangerous, the old midwife who picked up her obstetric knowledge by practical experience, or the rule of thumb, or the six weeks, three months, diplomated midwife. We are inclined to give the palm

to the latter, for the older type was cautious, whilst the latter is hazardous. The teachers and others interested in certain schools of training are all in favour of a Bill which will bring their services into requisition, and as twenty or thirty pounds are paid for the privilege of a so-called training, the loss of such sums of money would be keenly felt. But we must rise above all pecuniary considerations and adhere to principles. Midwifery cannot be learnt in six weeks, three or six months. Though medical students bring to their training in midwifery minds prepared to grasp all the points involved in it by their previous studies, yet it cannot be denied that they have to perfect themselves in midwifery when they commence practice, and to make up for the deficiencies in their education after they have commenced practice. Their knowledge of anatomy and physiology enables them to do this. They are on a higher plane. The average young woman who takes up midwifery, owing to her imperfect preliminary education, finds a difficulty in learning her pelvic anatomy, and her smattering knowledge of the important pelvic organs only renders her liable to mistakes. We need not insist too much on this point, for it is so apparent.

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(3rd) The plea that our poor cannot receive the attention of properly qualified medical men, owing to their scarcity, or largeness of fee, will not bear examination. There is a superabundance of medical men, and fees are as low as 7/6 or 10/-, and even the 7/6 can be paid by instalments. We need not now enter on the question as to whether a fee of 7/6 ought to be accepted, we are simply stating facts. Apart from the private practitioner who is willing to accept this low fee, there are numerous charities, and behind the charity there is the Poor-law, so that every parturient woman can have the services of a properly trained medical man in her great hour of travail. What is wanted in our large towns far more than midwives is the development of out-door nursing. We have District Nurses, women of experience who visit the poor in their homes, and who in their way contribute so much to the recovery of the sick poor; we require, in addition, Obstetric Nurses, especially trained, to visit those recently confined, to feed and attend to their babies. In certain cases a moderate fee should be paid for each visit; in the majority of cases amongst the poor no fee should be required, the Nurse being paid out of a special fund, the same as is now done with District Nurses. If as much enthusiasm could be aroused amongst those who are pushing on the Midwives' Bill in favour of the development of efficient obstetric nursing, much greater advantages would be secured by the parturient, and the massacre of the innocents which now takes place from improper feeding, neglect, and ignorance, would be arrested."

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THE prizes and certificates gained by the Nurses of the York County Hospital during the past year, were distributed on Tuesday, October 10th, by the Very Rev. the Dean of York. Lectures had been given in Anatomy by F. SHANN, M.B., M.R.C.S., and in Hygiene by R. PETCH, M.D. (London.) The Dean in his speech alluded to the arduous character of the work of the Night Nurses present, and to the great privilege that was theirs in being

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[next page](#)