

shillings to the midwives. It cannot be disputed that the Obstetrical Society of London alone has over 1,000 midwives on its register, and it is quite impossible for me to estimate the number of trained midwives belonging to other bodies. Why is it that these women are not to be found actually grappling with the evils complained of, unless they are employed by associations or hospitals? Then is it likely that, with the increased expenditure entailed upon midwives by registration, and a more complete education, they will more readily descend and accept the few shillings of the class which cannot afford more.

Now, Sirs, I may neither be a responsible nor a reflecting person, but I challenge anyone to show that the State recognition and control of midwives has in any country prevented the practice of the unlicensed, or any reasonable grounds for supposing that the scheme put forward by Dr. Boxall's and Mr. Humphreys' company can do so in this country. As to the magnitude of the evils complained of, there appears to be some reason for scepticism. The writer of your article has to go as far afield as Glamorgan to find a bad record. Taking Salford (population estimated at 203,427, number of births 7,047) as a fairly representative town, I find in Mr. Paget's report for 1893 that there were only thirty cases of puerperal fever, and he says that none of the cases call for remark of any special kind. Taking my own sanitary district as representative of a large, scattered, agricultural district (it contains 23,027 acres, and the average number of births per annum is 200), I find there has been one puerperal death in the five years ending December, 1893."

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DR. C. R. ILLINGWORTH also indites the following letter on the same subject to the *Medical Times*. We republish medical opinions on this question as we consider it of much interest to the community at large.

"To read the leading article in the *Lancet* on the above subject in the issue of the 16th inst., without previously knowing the opinion of that journal upon it, one would imagine that the writer was wishful to weigh most carefully all the points advanced. But when the positive and definite position, as expressed for instance in the *Lancet* for February 14th, 1891, is known, there is only one word which can properly express that journal's attitude. It is an attitude of "inconsistency."

The opinion of the *Lancet* is that there should be a registration of midwives.

The opinion of the Incorporated Medical Practitioners' Association is that there should be no such measure with regard to partially educated women of the class backed up by that journal and the Midwives' Registration Association; but only registration of those partially (medically) educated women as *obstetric Nurses*. If no man can serve two masters, neither can the *Lancet* serve two associations. Let every member of the Incorporated Medical Practitioners' Association take notice therefore that the *Lancet*, having pronounced in favour of the scheme advocated by the Registration Association, is not with us, and is therefore against us; and that to plausibly attempt, as that journal does in the aforesaid leading article, to "gather together" the various arguments in one incongruous whole, is to "scatter abroad" and destroy those principles which, as embodied in the Medical Act of 1886, and most nobly defended by Dr. Rentoul, we all hold dear.

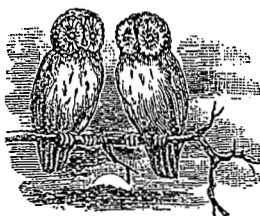
The practice of midwifery is indissolubly united with that of medicine and surgery, by the Medical Acts of 1882 and 1886. Since 1886, therefore, the calling of the old midwife has become obsolete; and any attempt to resuscitate it is an act of disloyalty to the General Medical Council who framed the Act. To quote Dr. Donald Macalister, it is simply "preposterous" that any man or any body of men should

dare to represent the "diplomas" given to partially educated women, to be nothing more than "testimonials"! More, it is astounding that after having "warned" the givers of these diplomas against the further continuance of the practice in 1892, the Council did not this year at once denounce it as "infamous in a professional respect." The result of this unfortunate and extreme clemency is the issue of the "Scheme for the Registration of Midwives." It will be the solemn duty of all private practitioners to bring this iniquitous scheme, as heretofore, to nought by energetic and concerted action as members of the Incorporated Medical Practitioners' Association."

Matrons in Council.

WHAT IS A TRAINED NURSE?

QUESTION 5.—How should a Nurse's knowledge be tested? If by examination, by whom?



MADAM, — One hears complaints on all sides of Nurses out of work. This is, of course, partly due to the great number of Nurses trained year by year, who go forth from the training schools all over the land.

And, again, from the fact that the "Nurse Farms" are still largely employing unskilled Nurses in competition with the thoroughly trained, for the sake of cent. per cent. profit. The remedy, as you have been saying for several years, is registration of the trained, and for such registered Nurses to refuse to work on terms of equality in private practice with the untrained, just as a duly registered medical practitioner refuses to meet professionally a quack doctor. To carry this system into effect, uniformity of education, examination and certification is absolutely necessary. The sooner we Matrons begin to consider this difficult point the better. This appears to me the primary duty of a Matron's Council, to meet and thoroughly thrash out the whole question. Personally, I am strongly in favour of a definite curriculum, both practical and theoretical for our Nurses; and a *public unbiassed examination*, conducted by persons who are not necessarily the teachers. Such examiners are too apt to be influenced by personal feelings. Besides these individual Nursing School examinations have a narrowing effect upon the pupils. What we women are recognising more day by day is the fact that our sphere is cramped, and we are mishapen in consequence; we want space in which to breathe and expand and *grow straight*.—Yours, &c.,

CHARLOTTE OKELL,
Matron of the Bridgewater Infirmary.

[Next week we shall discuss question No. 6.—"What form of Certificate should a Nurse receive?"]

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