

women, to petition Parliament to stop such heterogeneous work and compel all who attend lying-in women for gain to become and remain purely midwifery practitioners."

We congratulate the Manchester Midwives' Society on their courage in attacking a thorny and difficult question. We think it would be difficult to support a substantial opposition to the principle that a general medical or nursing practice is incompatible with midwifery practice, and that in the interests of the lying-in woman the two should be altogether dissociated, but we confess that we believe the influence which would be brought to bear against the proposed measure would be enormous. We do not, of course, uphold the practice of midwifery by either men or women who do not possess a basis of general knowledge, but we agree with the Manchester Midwives in thinking that so long as they actually practice midwifery they should refrain from undertaking other branches of work. In conclusion, we can only re-iterate our advice to all midwives to obtain, and study, a copy of the Draft Bill. It most closely concerns them, and unless they are prepared to give a strong and united expression of opinion concerning it we fear they will, if the Bill becomes law, find themselves so fettered that it will be impossible for them to continue in the practice of their profession.

As we go to press the same Society is holding a meeting at which the following resolution is put down for consideration:—

"That as the so-called Midwives' Bill, introduced and formally read a first time in the House of Commons on the tenth day of February, 1899, is a grossly unfair and unprecedented measure, prejudicial to the true interests of Midwives, and detrimental to those of the public, to petition Parliament to throw out the said Bill, and pass a measure obliging all midwives and other midwifery practitioners who practise for gain, to have a thorough knowledge of their professional work, and insisting upon due facilities for the acquirement of the same."

We are entirely in sympathy with the Midwives' Society in the attitude which they have adopted with regard to this Bill, and we consider that they are performing a professional duty in protesting against a measure which, if passed, must, inevitably, be injurious to the interests of the best class of Midwives. Where we should, probably, not be of one mind with the Manchester Midwives is in the position we have always maintained that a midwife must either be a qualified nurse, or a qualified medical practitioner, but that this is not recognised more widely than is at present the case is, we fear, more the fault of the Nursing Profession than of Midwives.

## Legal Matters.

### A BROKEN CONTRACT.

IN the Bloomsbury County Court, the Nurses' Co-operation, 8, New Cavendish Street, sued Mrs. Cole, 42, Grove End Road, for the services of Nurse Belcher, claiming £1 11s. 6d. as a retaining fee from October 13th to 22nd, and £2 12s. 6d. for her services for one week. The first amount claimed was paid into Court. The further sum the defendant declined to pay on the ground that the nurse had been engaged for a fortnight at the rate of £2 12s. 6d. per week, and had left within a week without giving due notice. The nurse's defence was that she had been discharged by the defendant and told to leave the house at two o'clock that afternoon. This the defendant denied, and in support of this statement it was proved that the nurse had not left at two o'clock, but that she had gone out in the course of the afternoon and returned about six o'clock without giving the least hint of her intention of leaving. An hour later the nurse stated her intention of leaving in an hour's time. The defendant's solicitor, who was in the house at the time, cautioned the nurse that if she left in this way she would forfeit all right to any wages. The nurse refused to discuss the matter, or to stop, although she knew well that there was no other nurse to take her place and that it would be difficult, if not impossible, at that hour, on a Sunday evening, to obtain one. The judge decided that, upon her own evidence it was quite clear that the nurse had broken her contract, and had not been discharged. Judgment was entered for the defendant.

We find upon the list of nurses of the Nurses' Co-operation, published last January, only one Nurse Belcher, who, according to the official report, was trained at St. Mary's Maternity Charity, Plaistow. We take it, therefore, this is the nurse in question. This is important, because (1) it would seem that the nurse has never had regular training in a general hospital; (2) that as she is not notified as one of the nurses who take monthly cases only, presumably she is sent out to nurse general cases also. We draw the attention of the Committee of the Nurses' Co-operation, which professedly protects the public from untrained nurses, to this fact. We also desire to point out to the nurse members of this Committee that they cannot expect the discipline obtainable only in a good training school in members who have only had a short training in a lying-in charity. We cannot believe that under the tactful management of Miss Philippa Hicks a case reflecting so little credit to the Co-operation would have been tried.

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