

Nursing Echoes.

* * * *All communications must be duly authenticated with name and address, not for publication, but as evidence of good faith, and should be addressed to the Editor, 20, Upper Wimpole Street, W.*



Out of the five candidates for election as Direct Representatives on the General Medical Council, three have expressed themselves as strongly in opposition to the registration of midwives, but are in favour of the registration of nurses. We quoted Dr. George Brown and Mr. George Jackson last week. Dr. S. Woodcock, of

Manchester, in his letter to his constituents, says, "I am *not* in favour of the registration of midwives as independent practitioners. I have always advocated the registration of obstetric nurses, whose functions should be strictly limited, and upon whom nursing duties should be imposed. I think, also, that the work of these registered women should be conducted under medical control."

From a correspondence in the "B.M.J.," we gather that the feeling upon the part of registered medical practitioners is to refuse "to follow" midwives—they argue that it is "infamous conduct" professionally to "cover" unqualified male practitioners—why should "covering" unqualified women be condoned? We imagine that this course of action would at once "solute" the midwife question.

We observe that Miss Macvitie's letters of protest addressed to the Executive Committee of the R.B.N.A. on the Midwives' List question, were by her request brought before the meeting of the General Council. The correspondence between Miss Macvitie and Miss Leigh, the secretary, was published in this journal some months ago.

It will be remembered that Mr. Fardon, and Mr. Bateman, of the Medical Defence Union, discussed and arranged that the terms "certificate" and "midwifery nurse," should be substituted for "diploma" and "midwife" in the special Roll of Midwives issued annually by the R.B.N.A., and in proof of this arrangement such terms were advertised in the "Nurses' Journal" for February, March and April, 1901, without any suggestion of this important change having been referred to the General Council or the nurse-members.

However, the protests which appeared on the question in this journal and those forwarded to the Executive Committee have had the effect of retaining the title "midwife" on this year's R.B.N.A. Roll, but a "Note," qualifying, as far as possible, the "diploma" of the London Obstetrical Society, has been inserted in the following terms:—

"Note.—Previous to June, 1895, the certificate granted by the London Obstetrical Society was called by this body a "Diploma"; since 1895 the word certificate has been substituted, and it should be so understood in the following list."

This is fudge, and begs the whole question. Those midwives to whom prior to 1895 the London Obstetrical Society granted a diploma as a "skilled midwife competent to attend natural labour"—*still remain midwives in possession of a Diploma*—and no amount of wriggling upon the part of Mr. Fardon can change their name and status. The pity is that both nurses and midwives are so supine about their own professional affairs that they are manipulated by medical men of the Fardon calibre, who sacrifice their professional interests every time.

However, we are thankful that the medical hon. secretary has not had "a walk over" in his attempt to depreciate the status of thoroughly trained midwives, owing to the prompt action of Miss Macvitie, Miss Rosina Graham, and other nurse members of the R.B.N.A. We agree with Mrs. Dacre Craven, who expressed the opinion at the Council meeting that Miss Macvitie should be thanked for her criticisms and remarks. This will encourage other members to show a little pluck. There is a long list of questions touching on their rights and privileges under the Charter, which the nurse members have allowed to go by default.

We learn that an attempt is to be made to form a local centre of the Royal British Nurses' Association in Birmingham. We hope those Matrons who are supporting this scheme will arrange that the objects of the Association, which professedly, at least, is a professional one, shall be explained by a trained nurse, and not by lay women, who cannot possibly grasp the significance of professional aspirations. We hope, also, that the Birmingham Matrons will insist upon prominence being given to the chief object for which the Association was originally formed, which was by State Registration to form nurses into a self-respecting body of skilled professional workers—who neither invite nor require patronage or charity.

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