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Editorial.

THE MIDWIVES' BILL.

TO those who have studied the amendments to the Midwives Bill which are to be brought forward in the Committee Stage by Sir John Batty Tuke, Sir Francis Powell, Mr. Griffiths Boscawen, and Dr. Robert Ambrose, it is apparent that a determined attempt will be made to alter the Bill so as to make the General Medical Council, instead of the Privy Council, the supreme authority, to re-introduce the system of Annual Licensing, to deprive the Incorporated Midwives Institute of representation, and to give it to the Royal British Nurses' Association; and, lastly, to make the appointment of even one woman on the Board optional instead of compulsory. After observing the temper of the House of Commons on the occasion of the second reading of the Bill, we do not believe that it will consent to place the General Medical Council in a position of absolute control over midwives, but efforts should certainly be made to minimize the effects of the pressure which will be brought to bear in this direction, and also to obtain the appointment of at least one

midwife on the Midwives' Board. If the question is viewed from the industrial standpoint it will at once be recognized as most unsafe to give absolute power over a new profession for women, to the organized and powerful profession of medicine, more especially when it is remembered that midwives are bound to come into financial competition with a section of medical practitioners. Further, it will be conceded that the members of every profession and calling are entitled to representation upon the body which governs them, a principle which has recently been recognised in the Plumbers' Registration Bill. The absurdity of forming a Midwives Board, without providing for the presence of even one midwife upon it must surely be apparent to the Standing Committee on Law.

The cogent reasons against Annual Licensing, and the advantages of the system of notification to practice which has replaced it in the present Bill, were admirably explained by Mr. Heywood Johnstone in the course of the Debate on the Bill in the House of Commons, and will, no doubt, commend themselves to the Committee of Law.

The efforts of the Hon. Officers of the Royal

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