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## Editorial.

### THE NATIONAL TRAINING-SCHOOL FOR MIDWIVES.

We referred in our last issue to the proposal made to build a general hospital, with a maternity annexe, with the object of providing a National Training-School for Midwives for "educated gentlewomen." The points involved in this proposition are so important that we propose to discuss it this week at length.

In the first place, it is once more evident that philanthropic ladies with excellent intentions get into hopeless difficulties if they attempt to organise professional persons unless they act in conjunction with members of the profession concerned. Had this been done in the present instance, we venture to say that the proposition to establish a hospital in which women should receive eighteen months' training in general nursing would never have been made, because experienced nurses would have pointed out at once not only that this training would be valueless from a nurse-training point of view, but also that the patients could not be efficiently cared for in a hospital where such a system was in force.

Then, again, while undoubtedly there is need for increased facilities for midwifery education for nurses, there are numberless hospitals in which a full training in general nursing is given. Any committee which takes in hand the organisation of midwifery education for nurses on a national basis will find no difficulty in obtaining a supply of women trained in general nursing willing to undertake midwifery work for a definite time, under suitable conditions, in consideration of training received in this special branch of work. A committee which concerns itself with providing efficient attendants for the lying-in poor will, therefore, do well to utilise the material to its hand in regard to general training in nursing, and to concentrate its attention on the special training in midwifery.

The establishment of small maternity hospitals in populous centres is from every point of view more desirable than centralisation of the work.

The last point we desire to suggest is that the midwifery nursing of the artisan class in this country could be best and most efficiently effected through the medium of the Queen Victoria Jubilee Institute, and we should welcome the organisation of a special fund to defray the cost of training as midwives fully-qualified nurses who would subsequently work in connection with the Institute.

We believe that so far the work of the Queen's Jubilee nurses in regard to midwifery work has been to take over the nursing of cases which have not followed a normal course from institutions and midwives, rather than to set aside a proportion of a staff only sufficient for its present needs for active midwifery work. The extension of the work of the Institute, with the definite object of providing skilled obstetric aid for lying-in patients, in the same way that it now carries skilled nursing aid to the homes of the poor in cases of general illness, would, we believe, commend itself to many and obtain much support.

As to the training ground for these midwives, various openings suggest themselves, of which we will mention one, namely, the lying-in wards of workhouses. While it is undoubtedly a national scandal that these wards should be utilised year after year by women who come in annually for the birth of their illegitimate children, yet if this humiliation is irremediable, at least let the work in such wards be carefully organised, and utilised for the training of women in this special branch of work so that they may be qualified to render skilled help to the poor.

Lastly, if it were understood that the proposed branch of the Jubilee Institute worked definitely, as its nurses do at present, under the direction of the medical profession, we believe its aid would be cordially welcomed and appreciated by medical practitioners.

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