

for so describing her. Whether or not, it emphasises the urgent need for the creation of a Central Nursing Council, which would act, when necessary, as a disciplinary body, and remove from the accredited members of the nursing profession those who have proved themselves unworthy to remain in it.

#### WHEN IS IGNORANCE CRIMINAL?

Under the startling headings, "Three Women Dead—Fatal Ignorance at Brighton—The Need of Registered Nurses," a Brighton contemporary gives the account of an inquest held on a young married woman who was attended in her confinement by a local midwife.

Neither the Press, the public, nor even the medical profession appear to discriminate between midwives and nurses. It is well, therefore, to point out that a midwife has, as a rule, had no training as a nurse, but she is—or should be—qualified to treat and care for normal cases of midwifery. Further, that after the 1st of January next year the Midwives' Registration Act will come into operation.

Nurses, on the other hand, are qualified to carry out medical directions for the treatment of the sick. They are not necessarily midwives, or competent to treat ordinary maternity cases. No Act has, as yet, been introduced into the House of Commons providing for their registration, and the trained and the untrained, the safe and the unsafe, compete for the public favour in the open market, and it is by no means always the best woman who is most successful.

In the present case it was a midwife—Mrs. Shrivell—not a nurse, who attended the case in question. When seen by a medical man—called in by a nurse whom Mrs. Shrivell had asked to attend her cases, and who at once sent for medical assistance—she was very ill of peritonitis and all the symptoms of puerperal fever. Her surroundings were dirty. Mrs. Shrivell also sent for the doctor to attend her personally. She was suffering from blood poisoning caused by a chronic ulcer. The doctor (Mr. Baker) said that both the present case, and two other women at whose confinements Mrs. Shrivell had been present, had died within a short time. He did not consider that any woman with an abrasion of the skin should nurse a patient. Dr. Newsholme, Medical Officer of Health, said that the three fatal cases all occurred within twenty-four hours of each other. There was no doubt in his mind that the filth from the chronic ulcer from which Mrs. Shrivell was suffering was the cause of the puerperal fever in each case. When the Midwives' Act came into operation, the local authority would have power to prevent the registration of unsuitable nurses.

The Coroner said he did not think Mrs. Shrivell was criminally responsible, as it did not appear she realised the serious state of things. The jury returned a verdict of "Death from natural causes,"

on what ground it is difficult to understand. "Death from poison conveyed to the patient without criminal intent" would be more in accordance with the facts.

## El Retrospect of Registration.

### THE VIEWS OF THE LATE SIR HENRY ACLAND.

The first reference to the subject of State Registration of Nurses of which we are cognisant appears in the preface to a "Handbook for Hospital Sisters," by Miss Florence S. Lees, written by Dr. Henry W. Acland (afterwards Sir Henry) in the year 1874—just thirty years ago.

Leading up to his far-seeing remarks on this question, Sir Henry writes:—

"Completely to appreciate the place of nursing in our body politic needs a little attention. Miss Nightingale first startled this country by making familiar the idea that a cultivated woman of gentle birth could safely leave a wealthy home for the lines of a sickly camp, and staunch the wounds and tend the fevers of an army in the field. She first showed how great a work is here for woman, but at the same how requisite are training, instruction, and organisation.

"Her writings as well as her practice show this. Her 'Notes on Nursing,' her 'Notes on Hospitals,' her remarks in the Report of the Cubic Space Commission with respect to nursing in workhouses, her regulations for the Nursing School at St. Thomas's Hospital in London, are but parts of a great landmark she has raised in the history of civilisation. On this landmark there seems to be engraved in clear characters, 'NURSING IS THE MEDICAL WORK OF WOMEN.'

"But the nursing there recorded is an art which needs special mental qualities, special culture, and a special power of physical endurance. Nursing is a department of the profession of medicine and surgery.

"It is incompatible with the ordinary practice of the physician and the surgeon, because there is often implied entire devotion by the nurse to a single patient, and sometimes, indeed, the devotion to a single patient of two or of three nurses. Nursing has, therefore, become a special subject of education, and the appliances of the nursing school also are special.

"This is at once seen by considering the work that must be daily done in a large hospital ward.

"1st. The common work of cleaning—housemaid's work. This, in a room where there are twenty to thirty sick persons, must obviously be constant and laborious if the condition of absolute cleanliness is to be maintained in person and bed, in all articles of furniture, and all the vessels and apparatus of whatever kind for daily use.

"2nd. The work of tending the sick themselves in

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