



Letters to the Editor.

(Notes, Queries, &c.)

Whilst cordially inviting communications upon all subjects for these columns, we wish it to be distinctly understood that we do not IN ANY WAY hold ourselves responsible for the opinions expressed by our correspondents.

THE REGISTRATION OF MIDWIVES.

To the Editor of "The Nursing Record."

MADAM,—As a Matron of a Maternity Hospital, and Training School for Midwives, and one under whose notice some thousands of parturient women have been skillfully attended by certified Midwives—not to their danger, but to their comfort and more speedy convalescence—I should like to make a few observations upon the views reprinted in today's NURSING RECORD from the current number of the *Provincial Medical Journal*, and which I beg to suggest are somewhat one-sided.

I am not aware of any place where Midwifery is taught (?) in six weeks—three months being the shortest term at any recognised training school. But perhaps the writer is making the common mistake of confusing Midwives with *Monthly Nurses*.

In three months, during a course of Lectures on Elementary Physiology and Midwifery, a woman, with a very ordinary share of intelligence, can gain a complete knowledge of the mechanism of the pelvis and of its organs, and of the management of a *normal* labour, together with the signs of any abnormal condition, and the desirability of summoning a doctor at once.

The woman who is being trained in the duties of a Midwife is not training for the same knowledge as the medical student—who is to become, by his studies, able to take up the case which is beyond her powers. Surely this is plain, and I need not point out how unfair it is to compare the length of the training of the one, who only undertakes to assist the parturient woman while nature does her own work, with that of him who undertakes to step in where nature fails, and skill and science are required.

The writer says, "Certificates and diplomas are granted for a price by certain institutions." In this institution the price is carefully calculated to just cover the cost of the pupil's board and lodging, and the fees paid to the doctors for their lectures and examination.

The woman who fails to grasp the anatomy of the pelvis during three months' close study of it, must indeed have had a very "imperfect preliminary education."

The writer says in reference to the poor medical man's fee, that they can obtain his services for as low as 7s. 6d., which may be paid in instalments. Probably so, but does the medical man make the bed, wash the baby (thereby ensuring the proper management of the cord and umbilicus), clear the room of soiled linen, &c., and leave the patient in as sanitary a condition as the surrounding circumstances will permit? A Midwife will do this for the very poor for 5s., and will repeat these kindly offices at each visit—four or five at least.

There are fourteen certificated Midwives employed by this hospital to attend *free* upon some fifteen hundred poor women annually. Women whose homes would be utterly broken up and lost if they were forced to enter a hospital or workhouse for the period of their lying-in, yet who could not pay one shilling for attendance—much less the minimum fee of 7s. 6d. for a medical man. How does the writer propose to deal with these poor women when he has swept away the mischievous Midwife?

The qualified Midwives now in practice are, for the most part, married women, living in their own homes, who have satisfied some board of medical examiners that they understand the anatomy of the pelvis, can manage a *normal* case, removing all danger of post-partum hæmorrhage, can recognise any condition requiring the aid of a medical man, and can be of greater comfort to her patient, who cannot afford to pay for the services of a Monthly Nurse, than the kindest-hearted doctor could possibly be.

Some doctors will not sufficiently divide the trained and diplomated Midwife, and the untrained and ignorant one, into two distinct classes. They are as distinct as the medical man and the quack. Many cases of malpraxis have been quoted, and I could add many more to the list, but never once has it been stated that the "Midwife" had received the despised three months' training.

I heartily echo the words of the article of this week's *Lancet*: "We are in favour of any penalties or precautions that will secure the strict limitation of such women to their own humble duties"; and I beg to add that, from my own experience, I unhesitatingly affirm that the mischief that is done to the parturient woman arises from the ignorance of the *untrained, self-styled* "Midwife," and, in not a few cases, from the ill-educated student.—I am, yours faithfully,

B. M. WORRALL,

Matron of the Manchester Maternity Hospital.

[We are glad to open our columns for free discussion on this important matter.—Ed.]

THE TRAINED NURSES' ANNUITY FUND.

To the Editor of "The Nursing Record."

MADAM,—May I solicit your help in finding a Home for a trained Nurse, aged 61, who has been for several years incapacitated by an incurable tumour and for which no relief can be obtained by operation. This Nurse, having recently lost her husband, is now without a home, and I am anxious to find her one with someone who will take an interest in her and attend upon her with kindness and give her every comfort, for which due payment will be made. Perhaps, amongst your readers, there are many Nurses who would care to provide a home for this their suffering Sister. One of Evangelical principles preferred.—I am, your obedient servant,

R. GOFTON SALMOND,
Hon Secretary, Trained Nurses'
Annuity Fund.

73, Cheapside,
London, Oct. 16th, 1893.

Comments and Replies.

Miss Conway, Darlington.—We should strongly dissuade you from training as a Monthly Nurse before you have been trained in general nursing. The responsibility of nursing lying-in cases is very great, and for the comfort and well-being of the patient, the Nurse cannot possibly attend to her in the *best* manner unless she has thorough and skilled experience.

Miss Talbot, Greenwich.—We regret that your article is too long for our columns. We should advise you to communicate with the Editor of the *Charity Record*, who gives full reports of meetings.

Nurse Mary, Brighton.—We will touch upon the subject in an early issue.

Miss Marion Pincoffs, Dunster.—The writer is anonymous, and must therefore remain so. If you send slips to us they can be forwarded. The fact that the Holdall

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