

deduction at the time of joining. There would then be no disappointment, whereas at present nurses understand that in putting their money into the Pension Fund they obtain two and a half per cent. interest. They are, therefore, naturally disappointed to find that this two and a half per cent., and another two and a half in addition is absorbed in working expenses. Nurses cannot expect that all the work in connection with the fund shall be done for nothing, and we think that it would be well to make it clear, that the Pension Fund is worked on business lines, and does not perform its work, as a charitable institution, gratuitously.

### The Pestiferous Remnant.

THE *Scalpel* in its current issue publishes what it terms "a very powerful diatribe" against the officials of State Recognition of Midwives in New York, by Henry J. Garrigues, M.D., of New York. Turning up the pages of our dictionary to find the precise meaning of the word diatribe we find as synonyms "a stream of invective—an abusive harangue." Midwives who read the article in question will not think the addition of the words "very powerful" to the foregoing one wit too strong. Here are some of the reasons advanced by Dr. Garrigues for his opinion that

THE MIDWIFE MUST BE ENDED NOT MENDED.

1. "The institution of midwives is a remnant of barbaric times, a blot on our civilization, which ought to be wiped out as soon as possible."

2. "The average midwife is entirely incapable of foreseeing complications; and preach to her as you like, she will never grasp, still less carry out, the principles of antiseptis."

3. "If a laceration of the perineum occurs, if it is not of unusual dimensions, the midwife may not be able to see it at all; or, if she observes the injury, she does not realize its importance, and it is to her advantage to conceal it. . . . The honest physician will take proper measures to repair the injury."

4. "Any law embodying a recognition of midwives and the establishment of colleges for their instruction would not only be injurious to the lawful and rational rights of the medical profession, but would result in great danger to the community at large."

5. "Midwives and schools of midwifery are the pestiferous remnant of pre-antiseptic days."

The first conclusion of all unbiassed persons on reading this "very powerful diatribe" will be, we think, the *prima facie* one that the institution which requires such strong opposition to effect its abolition must have taken very deep root in the national life. Next, if we examine the arguments for the "ending" of the midwife *seriatim* we shall probably arrive at the following conclusions:—

1. The institution of medical men is a remnant of barbaric times. It is therefore equally logical to assume that they are a blot on our civilization, which ought to be wiped out as soon as possible, an assumption which few, if any of us, will be prepared to adopt. That the education of the midwife, as that of the medical man, should advance with increasing civilization, and should be laid down on the same lines, in her own sphere, of a triple qualification, we fully admit.

2. The statement that the average midwife is incapable of foreseeing complications, is an assertion which would have more weight if an iota of proof were produced in support of it. It is not denied that the modern nurse can carry out the principles of antiseptis in her general work; it is an acknowledged fact that modern operations could not be performed unless this were the case. Why then should she be incapable of carrying the same principles into midwifery work?

3. There is no reason to suppose that the sight of midwives is especially faulty. There is equally no ground for assuming that honesty is confined to physicians, which is presumably the inference which we are invited to draw.

4. This assertion requires to be substantiated.

5. "Hard words break no bones," but on all counts we must hold the statements of Dr. Garrigues "Not proven," and his attack on the "Pestiferous remnant" to be consequently an unwarranted "stream of invective" and "an abusive harangue."

### Midwives and Obstetric Nurses.

THE Registration of these workers is one of the burning questions of the hour, and, as the *British Medical Journal* remarks, it may be interesting at the present time to give some particulars with regard to the regulations under which midwives are permitted to follow their calling in some foreign countries.

#### THE FRENCH LAW AS TO MIDWIVES.

The Act under which they work in France is the *Loi sur l'Exercice de la Médecine* (1892). This law regulates also the practice of medicine and dentistry, but the provisions with regard to midwives are in the main distinct. Instead, therefore, of giving a general account of the law, it will be sufficient for our present purpose to give translations of certain sections having special reference to midwives.

#### SECTION III.—CONDITIONS AS TO THE EXERCISE OF THE PROFESSION OF MIDWIFE.

3. Midwives cannot practise the art of accouchement unless they are provided with a diploma of the first or second class granted by the French

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