

### The Pulse of the Public.

THE Editor of the "Practitioner" is to be congratulated upon the acumen with which he has gauged the public feeling upon the Midwife Question. He writes: "There are medical men who regard this question from a wider and more dignified professional standpoint than that which has been so prominently brought before the public lately. No one knows better than ourselves the harm that is done to the dignity of a noble profession by the tactics of this noisy section, which seems to have obtained the ear of many of the medical journals and claims to represent the profession; the public is, unfortunately, not so well aware as ourselves of how little this section is really representative of the best medical practitioners, and it is with the deepest regret we perceive that a feeling is growing in the minds of the lay and Parliamentary public against medical men, originated by members of their own profession." There is no doubt that unprejudiced members of the public are daily becoming more alive to the fact that the heated opposition to legislation is by no means creditable to the section of the medical profession which has aroused it. For instance, with regard to midwives, they recognize that the opposition does not come from the leaders of the medical profession, but from those practitioners who, in their daily practice, would, as regards midwifery, be brought into financial competition with midwives. It is the old cry, raised hundreds of years ago, "Our craft is in danger." The public argue reasonably, therefore, that such medical men cannot judge the merits of the midwife question dispassionately, and they realize daily more and more the danger of placing one section of the community, whose financial interests are involved, in a position of control over another. This is a point which political economists, and all interested in industrial legislation, cannot fail to grasp.

We have already pointed out that this is precisely what will occur if the proposed legislation for midwives is carried out, and it is for this reason that we have always uncompromisingly opposed it, and were we a midwife, we should have fought this question quite as tenaciously as we have that of legislation for trained nurses.

With regard to the latter question we may state that nursing legislation and reform being necessary, they must be effected. We have always been willing, and wishful, to work to this end in conjunction with medical men, but, we must honestly say that, having in mind our experience as a member of Committees of the Royal British Nurses Association, and the unscrupulous methods there employed by narrow-minded men to compass the subjugation of the trained nurses, we

believe that reform will not be effected without publicity. The illiberal medical faction have constantly asserted, with a view to obtaining the entire control of nurses, that nurses must carry out doctors' orders, that the modern nurse desires organization independently of the medical profession, and that this cannot be allowed. But this argument is a wilful misrepresentation of facts. The better trained a nurse, the more minutely exact she is in carrying out medical directions with regard to patients in her charge; in this relation there is no doubt, and it has never been disputed by nurses, that their position is one of unquestioning obedience to medical orders, but beyond this point, and with regard to the discipline, control, and personal liberty of nurses, the medical profession has no right to interfere.

It is becoming well ingrained in the public mind that medical men are unfair both to nurses and midwives, and this has aroused greater interest in nursing and midwifery matters than it would have been possible to attain by any other means.

This is the burning question at the present time, and one which must be settled: Are medical men to assume an absolute autocracy over nurses in their work and out of it? If they are not sufficiently liberal minded to realize that this can never be, there remains an appeal to Cæsar. The British public will recognize the danger of the industrial aspect of the question, and if the medical profession continue to oppose legislation for nurses and midwives, the aid of public opinion must be invoked. It is ripe for such an appeal.

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### Appointments.

#### MATRONS.

MISS FRANCES E. MARQUARDT has been appointed Matron of the Infirmary, Havil Street, Camberwell. Miss Marquardt received her training at the Royal Free Hospital, and subsequently acted as Head Nurse and Superintendent of Nurses, at the General Hospital, Barbadoes, Sister at the Royal Free Hospital, Night Superintendent at the Greenwich Infirmary, and Superintendent Nurse at the Infirmary, Birkenhead.

MISS ANNIE FINDLAY has been appointed Matron of the Lancaster Corporation Sanatorium. Miss Findlay was trained for three years at Brownlow Hill Infirmary, and has held the positions of Theatre Nurse at the Stanley Hospital, Liverpool, District Nurse at Stone, Staffordshire, Charge Nurse at the Mill Road Infirmary, Liverpool, Superintendent Nurse at Keighley Union Infirmary, and Matron at the Keighley and Bingley Joint Hospitals, Keighley.

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