

The plain truth is the medical profession at large are determined not to permit either midwives or trained nurses to become Registered by the State, and the abandonment of the true interests of both midwives and nurses, by the societies formed to obtain legal status for them is one of the most convincing proofs that no women's work should be controlled by men. The interests of the midwives have been sacrificed by the Midwives Bill Committee and the trained nurses sold into bondage, by the Royal British Nurses' Association. It remains to be seen if Parliament will enforce penal legislation for these unfortunate workers—or will refuse to do so.

Yours truly,  
A LANCASHIRE MIDWIFE.

[As Mr. Rhodes says: "The vote covers all."—ED.]

**THE NEW MIDWIVES' BILL.**

*To the Editor of "The Nursing Record."*

MADAM,—The independence of the NURSING RECORD is so well known, that I would beg your permission to say a few words concerning the Midwives' Bill now proposed, from a point of view which may be different from your own or that of the majority of your readers.

I, like the majority of medical practitioners, have steadfastly opposed the idea of registering midwives, on the ground, that at present the women who adopt that title have no right to it at all. They are neither medical practitioners who by law cannot practise midwifery, without obtaining a diploma also in medicine and surgery; nor are they nurses, who are content to recognize the limitations of their knowledge and experience, and willing to work under medical control and direction. They desire to pose as independent practitioners without either the training or the capacity which the law rightly requires from medical men and women before it accords them that position.

Well—it may be safely assumed that their pretensions are exploded—and that no Act will be passed giving them the status they aspired to. But I have been surprised to find that a serious blot in the present Bill has apparently escaped notice.

Clause 9 defines the duties of the medical practitioners who are the local supervising authority. These duties are so extensive that I imagine they will be found to occupy a considerable part of these officials' time and thoughts—a fact which will make the work somewhat expensive for the ratepayers. *Inter alia* these duties are:—

"(1) To exercise general supervision over all midwives practising within the prescribed area in accordance with the rules to be laid down under the provisions of this Act.

(2) To investigate charges of malpractice, negligence, or misconduct, on the part of any midwife practising within his district, and, if he considers that a prima facie case is established, to report the same to the Central Midwives' Board.

(3) To suspend any midwife from practice, in accordance with the rules to be laid down by the Central Midwives Board, if he considers such suspension necessary to prevent the spread of infection."

Now it is certain that these invidious duties will not be performed. They would bring the practitioners concerned into most unenviable odium with the midwives and their supporters, in the district. And in practice, I have no doubt that these provisions would

become a dead letter, that the "supervision" would be a mere illusory sham, and the last state of the midwives' question would be worse than the first.

I am moreover by no means struck by the justice of giving midwives no voice in the government of their calling—if it is recognised by law—nor am I convinced that under the provisions of the Bill, if it were accepted by Parliament, the calling would attract women of education, refinement and devotion to duty. I must apologize for asking so much of your valuable space, and would defer to another opportunity other comments upon the new Bill.

Yours faithfully,  
A MEDICAL PRACTITIONER.

**IS IT DISCIPLINE OR TYRANNY?**

*To the Editor of the "Nursing Record."*

DEAR MADAM,—The letter of "An Intending Probationer" will be read with great interest by many persons, who like myself, wonder how many trained nurses, can pass through years of hospital experience, and yet when they take up private nursing so constantly fail to act with self reliance in difficulty, or with common sense. From your correspondent's complaint that the rules for Probationers admitted into Marylebone Infirmary deprive those young women of the liberty of action exercised in every position in life—excepting in prison and in an idiot asylum—it is easily explained why many private nurses are failures, if they are trained under rules which deprive them of liberty of conscience and speech. Then at the end of the nineteenth century, when women have proved themselves capable of so much, is it not almost incredible that nurses should be bound not to speak to one another if they meet in the street when off duty? It is almost incredible that any Board of Guardians could issue such a rule—or permit their officers to attempt to enforce it. For the sake of other Probationers—who may be deterred from entering the Marylebone Infirmary for training by such an outrageous rule—it is to be hoped that the matter may be brought to the notice of these Guardians in the parish of Marylebone who may know nothing or little of the system at their infirmary, and who may thus be induced to enquire into the matter.

I remain yours,  
A PARISHIONER AND RATEPAYER.

**NURSES' MANNERS.**

*To the Editor of "The Nursing Record"*

DEAR MADAM,—I have read with much interest the correspondence in your valuable paper, *re* nurses' manners, or rather the want of them. Surely "A Detester of Discourtesy" had a somewhat unique experience. At what other hospital than the one mentioned are the patients refused papers to read. Surely some were well enough to enjoy them. Then again what is a "fire back"? I suppose the nurse meant she would burn them—rather impertinent of her. I think this young woman would be ill-bred and ill-mannered anywhere, not only in a hospital. The moral I think is this—"State Registration" and a higher state of nursing altogether. Apologising for encroaching on your space,

Yours faithfully,  
A READER,  
Bombay.

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