

hood, and now we find, out of the twelve hospitals with medical schools attached, *three entirely closed at the same time*. Had Middlesex followed last year's precedent, and closed every ward, where would the unfortunate people, who have crowded into its wards, have found treatment?

This entire closing of our great London hospitals during the holiday season, is a new and evidently an increasing abuse, and the sooner the subscribers realise its cruelty to the London poor, the better. If the London Hospital, amidst its teeming east end population, can reconstruct various departments, and build wards, without for a day closing its doors, the other general hospitals can do likewise. After all the hospitals are supported for the benefit of the poor, and not for the medical schools.

WHO IS RIGHT?

An important decision has recently been made by Mr. McGee, the revising barrister at Birmingham, namely, that the receipt of medical relief in a workhouse infirmary does not disqualify the recipients from their right to a vote. Mr. McGee consequently allowed votes in fourteen cases which, he held came within the range of the Medical Relief Act. The decision is one which will be very generally acceptable. It is most desirable that the stigma of pauperism should be removed from workhouse infirmaries which are, in fact, municipal hospitals, and this decision should do much to secure their recognition on this basis, and to abolish the feeling with which they are regarded by the respectable poor. As we reported last week the hospitals of the Metropolitan Asylums Board did not find favour with the public until they were made free from pauper taint, and available for paupers and non-paupers without distinction. It is much to be desired that our workhouse infirmaries, under another name, should be maintained on the same basis. A step in the right direction has been made in those parishes where the infirmaries are separated from the workhouse. But more is needed if they are to benefit to the greatest possible extent deserving members of the working classes. With regard to the individuals whom it concerns the decision is also a satisfactory one. In the case of men, who, when in health, keep themselves off the rates by their own work, it is obviously unjust that because they are laid aside by sickness they should be deprived of the right to exercise

their franchise, and be classed with lunatics and incarcerated criminals. Criminals, be it observed, when they are free from police supervision, are allowed to exercise the franchise; and within the last few weeks a man still under supervision has contested his right to a vote, which was, however, disallowed. We note that Mr. W. H. Roberts, the Revising Barrister at Kensington, has disfranchised a number of persons who have received relief in the Infirmary, so that, according to this ruling, receipt of free medical relief is a greater disqualification than theft or forgery! Is there a court of appeal when revising barristers differ?

MIDWIFERY PRACTICE IN ILLINOIS.

THE Illinois State Board of Health has sent the following circular to every midwife in the State whose address could be found: "Madam, —Under the provisions of the Act to Regulate the Practice of Medicine in the State of Illinois, approved April 24th, 1899, in force July 1st, 1899, midwives are forbidden to call or advertise themselves as physicians or doctors, and prohibited from using any drug or medicine, and from attending other than cases of labour. The same law states that anyone shall be regarded as practising medicine who shall treat, profess to treat, operate on, prescribe for any physical ailment, or any physical injury to or deformity of another. You are directed, therefore, by this Board to immediately discontinue all advertisements in the newspapers in which you are designated as 'Doctor,' 'Mrs. Doctor,' 'Doctress,' or as 'Physician.' You are directed further to confine your practice to midwifery alone, as you are licensed as a midwife, and as such are authorised to attend cases of labour only. You have no authority to treat, or profess to treat, diseases of women; or to treat, or profess to treat, any physical ailments of another. If you wish to advertise in the newspapers, or otherwise, you must do so as a midwife. A violation of the above regulations will subject you to prosecution by this Board, and will be deemed a sufficient cause for revoking your certificate."

It would appear from the above circular that midwives in the State of Illinois have considerably exceeded legitimate limits in the exercise of their vocation. It may be hoped that irregular practice, perpetrated under the name of midwifery, has now been effectively dealt with. The circular is certainly sufficiently peremptory!

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)