

must go on increasing as the nursing departments of our hospitals develop into nursing schools, in which highly qualified teachers instruct the pupils in the necessary details of their work.

It is noteworthy that nurses now-a-days accept all the numerous advantages of a professional and collegiate education, without, in the majority of cases, realising in the slightest degree the benefit conferred upon them by the expenditure of public money. In other professions, as for instance those of music or the drama, those who enter their ranks as pupils have to pay their instructors large sums of money before they can begin to make a living, and during this time they have to maintain themselves. Nurses, on the contrary, from the beginning of their period of probation, are housed in institutions which, although bearing the name of Nursing Homes, are in many instances virtually Nursing Colleges. They receive in most cases board and lodging on a very liberal scale, with efficient attendance and ample bath rooms, in a well appointed house. When the cost of living, more especially in London, upon even the most modest scale, is considered it will be realized that nursing pupils in this particular alone receive a remuneration for their untrained services, the economic value of which, we do not hesitate to say, they by no means estimate. In addition they also receive, as a rule, a small salary, uniform and washing, as well as their nursing education, which includes, besides their practical education in the wards, theoretical instruction from some of the most eminent medical men of the day, the necessary cost being at present met out of the public funds subscribed for the maintenance of the hospitals.

The question as to how the expenses of nursing education are to be defrayed in the future, is one which might well be discussed by professional bodies of nurses in conjunction with the authorities of training schools. Is this scientific and expensive education to be provided out of charitable subscriptions, or shall the nurses of the future pay, as in many American training schools, either in money or time for the professional education which they receive? Our own opinion is that, during their probationary period, the expense of their education should be borne, in part at least, by the nurses themselves. Here is an important question for discussion by the Matrons' Council.

## Annotations.

### THE MIDWIVES' BILL.

All unexpectedly the Midwives' Bill has passed its second reading in the House of Commons, an instance of how the passage of Private Members' Bill is largely a matter of fate and opportunity. The Government business having been finished on Friday in last week at 5.30, Mr. Goschen moved the adjournment of the House on the ground that as the evening had been ear marked for Government business, no private business ought to come on. The common sense of the House, however, revolted at this proposition, with the result that not only was a Bill to prevent the sale of intoxicating liquors to children under 16 read for the second time without opposition, but that after an ineffectual protest, the second reading of the Midwives' Bill, moved by Mr. Heywood Johnstone, was agreed to by a majority of 90. The votes for the measure being 124, and against it 34. We have on former occasions mentioned the points upon which this Bill appears to us to be defective. Before it is presented for a third reading it will now be discussed in Committee, and we hope that the opportunity will be used for safeguarding the interests of the midwives. So far the local authority for supervising midwives has not been selected. If it is placed in the hands of local medical men it is easy to understand that their interests and those of the midwives may at times be at variance. It would therefore not be fair, either to medical men or midwives to place their relations on a basis so mutually undesirable and unfair. No body of women whose work may bring them to some extent into financial competition with the medical profession should be placed by law under its domination. The Bill as it stands has not the cordial approval of the Medical Profession, for at the last meeting of the Executive Committee of the General Medical Council the Registrar reported he had received from the Midwives' Bill Committee six copies of a Midwives' Bill introduced into Parliament during the present Session, and after discussion it was resolved:—

"That as the Midwives' Bill now before Parliament does not make the provision as advised by the General Medical Council (see report in Minutes, vol. xxxvi., p. 5015) for requiring the licensed midwife to apply for qualified medical assistance in every case attended by a midwife which presents symptoms of difficulty, abnormality, danger, or disease on the part of the mother or the newborn child, the Executive Committee would again represent to the Lord President that, in

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