

Medical Opposition to Midwives' Registration.

THE Committee constituted at the meeting of Medical Practitioners, held at the Cannon Street Hotel on April 4th, to oppose the Midwives' Registration Bill, is already getting to work, and, at a recent meeting, a "whip" was read, signed by certain Members of Parliament, to convene a Conference at the House of Commons to receive a deputation of the Joint Committee. A draft address was also approved, subject to modification by the Executive of the Committee, for signature by constituents in boroughs or divisions.

In the address, the personal opposition of Members of Parliament to the Midwives' Bill is invited, and they are asked to oppose in Parliament the adoption of the report upon, and the third reading of, the Bill, unless amended into the form of useful and proper provision for the training and registration of midwifery nurses not authorised to act in any case as practitioners of the art and science of midwifery without medical education and registration.

One of the strongest supporters, and, indeed, the proposer, of the new Association, is Dr. Rentoul, of Liverpool, who holds, and advisedly, that "no persons in this country will to-day receive the slightest political attention or respect unless they are organized, powerful, and influential." He is of opinion that the Association must have ample funds—about £2,500 he estimates will be necessary to carry the programme to a successful issue, and appeals to the medical profession for generous financial support.

With much that has been urged against the Registration of Midwives by the promoters of this Association we are entirely in sympathy. We have always maintained that there is no room for a hybrid between the medical practitioner and the trained nurse, more especially for one of a few months' training, who can, in no sense be considered qualified to undertake the serious responsibility of attending lying-in cases without medical supervision. We are also in agreement with the belief that, in this country, where medical help is within easy call, midwifery nurses working under medical direction could meet the needs of the working classes. We must, however, point out that the medical profession is beginning to organize its resistance somewhat late, as the third reading of the Midwives' Bill will probably take place in June; further, that the attitude adopted by the Hon. Officers of the Royal British Nurses' Association towards nurses, has caused considerable distrust in the *bona-fides* of the medical profession in opposing legis-

lation for any class of women when such legislation is likely to affect medical men prejudicially financially. Lastly, that members of the House of Commons are aware of this fact, for we have taken care that the despotic and intolerant conduct of the medical members of the Royal British Nurses' Association towards nurses, should be brought to their notice. In opposing the Midwives' Bill, therefore, in all honesty of purpose, we have no doubt that the opposition will suffer for the sins of their medical colleagues, less single-minded, who have made their own names a bye-word for ever, in the attitude they have assumed with regard to nursing reform.

We notice that one of the objects of the new Association for opposing Midwives' Registration, is "to support a Bill for the training and supervision of obstetric and other nurses, but with nurses' duties only." This is well if the Bill is one which commends itself to the nursing profession, and provision is made for the supervision of "nurses, with nurses' duties only," by members of their own profession; but we must point out at once, that the day has gone by when nurses can be legislated for without being consulted, and, moreover, that until nursing organization was undertaken by nurses, the condition of nursing was about as low as it was possible for it to be. It is to the hard work of conscientious and earnest women that it owes its present position, and they must be consulted as to any Bill legislating for their work.

Professional Honours.

AT the recent examinations of nurses at St. Bartholomew's Hospital, Miss Skey, the granddaughter of a very famous old surgeon who is still remembered in the Hospital, gained the first place in the final examination, an honour carrying with it the award of the gold medal given by the Clothworkers' Company. In the First Examination, Miss May Cooper came out head of the list and gained the Clothworkers' prize of books. Twenty-four nurses went in for the final examination, twenty-one of whom passed, and so obtained the certificate of the hospital and become graduates of the School. Nineteen nurses entered for the first examination, and all passed. This is a record occasion, for it rarely indeed happens that one or more candidates do not fail to give evidence of the amount of knowledge necessary to obtain a pass—a most disappointing moment for the unfortunate candidate, but proof, at least, that the examiners realise their public responsibility.

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