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EDITORIAL.

REVIEWING our consideration of the subject of the Registration of Midwives, we may remind our readers that thus far we have proved that it would be practically impossible—or if it were even possible, that it would be heartlessly cruel—to attempt to make it a crime for women to act as Midwives and Monthly Nurses for their neighbours and friends in the villages of these kingdoms, unless they were Registered Midwives; that there are thousands of hamlets where tens of thousands of children are born every year, where highly-skilled obstetric assistance is almost or quite impossible of attainment, and where consequently if help in child-birth is to be received at all, it must be from a near neighbour.

Furthermore, common sense would show what experience proves, that the attendant in such circumstances must be both Midwife and Monthly Nurse combined. Nay, more, that she must become for the time domestic manager as well. In other words, it is essential that to be of any service the helper must belong to the villager class, and be of the same rank and condition as the patient. A

well-known lady has discovered that the only way in which village Nursing can be carried on is by the sole employment of rustic workers, and the scheme which she has evolved upon the basis of this principle is, we believe, meeting with great and deserved success.

Now, it appears to us that in the initiation of the system of Registration of Midwives, this same fact must be clearly realised, and that it must not be expected that women who are undertaking this work among their village neighbours can possibly be placed upon the same level as those who devote themselves to the study of the work for prolonged periods under the greatest advantages, and finally practice as specialists, so to speak, amongst strangers and better-class people in large towns. In fact, there must, it appears to us, be two distinct grades of Midwives formed—an upper and a lower.

In the next place, while clearly recognising the futility, on the one hand, of expecting Parliament in these parlous times to pass an Act of any kind on this great subject, and the rank absurdity of expecting to secure in this country Protection in any form, either in matters of health or trade, we yield to no one in our most earnest conviction that some measure of reform in the present system of wholesale homicide by ignorant Midwives is an urgent, and an increasingly urgent, necessity. But we contend most strongly that in great and dangerous crises, it behoves all reformers to beware lest the remedy they propose is not worse than the disease.

It seems to us to be much wiser to attempt to imitate, in the attempted cure of these evils, the course which medical science now adopts in the treatment of bodily disease. Drugs are not given to the patient in character and amount sufficient to kill or cure, but the first efforts are directed towards placing him under such sanitary and physiological conditions, that the healing powers of Nature may work their full effect. So it does not appear unreasonable to suggest that the initial

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