

of poisoning by cocaine. And it appeared that this ex-Nurse had taken no less than sixteen grains of the drug, her system having been habituated perhaps to its action, as she had been using injections of it for herself for some length of time. Nurses as a class are undoubtedly a great deal too prone to indulge in drugs on their own prescription. They should take a lesson in this from Medical men, who, I believe, rarely, if ever, treat themselves, or take any medicine of any kind if they can avoid doing so.

THE *Lancet* last week had the following letter, which will interest many of my readers:—"Sir,—We are glad to see that public attention is at length being called to the crying evil of uncertificated women practising as Midwives. The recent cases reported in various papers of death through puerperal fever, conveyed to six poor lying-in women by an uncertificated Midwife, set forth in a striking manner the need of legislation as to the employment of untrained and irresponsible women. Though there are now many well-trained and Certificated Midwives in practice, the uncertificated women will continue to be employed, to the great detriment of mothers and infants; and nothing but compulsory Registration—that is, by Act of Parliament—will meet the case. It is earnestly hoped, therefore, that the Bill for the Registration of Midwives—notice of which has been given in the House of Commons—will shortly extend to the mothers of England that protection in child-bed which they can command in every other European country. The Midwives' Institute has been quietly and steadily working towards this end for the last eight years, and will gladly supply all information on this subject to anyone desiring it.—Yours faithfully, MARGARET NICHOL, Secretary Midwives' Institute."

OF course everyone who knows anything of the subject is well aware of the awful horrors which "on horrors' head accumulate," in the effects an ignorant Midwife can produce. But I cannot quite see how compulsory Registration would cure the evil. It cannot be intended to make it a criminal offence for one woman, even if she be not a Registered Midwife, to assist another who, perhaps far from all other assistance, is in labour. But if it does not mean that, what does "compulsory Registration" logically lead to? The measure clearly means that, on the one hand, every woman who has gained an Obstetric Certificate must, willy nilly, enter her name on the Register of Midwives and presumably pay the fees necessary for the maintenance of the organization; and, on the other hand, it infers that no

woman other than a Certificated Midwife will be permitted to attend women in child-birth.

CONSEQUENTLY, if the latter is not to become a dead letter at once, pains and penalties, imprisonment or, at least, fines, must be inflicted upon those who contravene the law. Is it not perfectly plain that this would only affect the very poor, and who could not therefore meet the pecuniary penalty, and would, in default, have to suffer detention in gaol? Can anyone believe that the law would be enforced, and if it were not, is it not abundantly clear that it would sink into disuse, and do nothing to remedy the dreadful evils which all must, from the ground of their hearts, wish to see prevented rather than cured?

MANY of the papers have had very important annotations upon the recent inquest at the London Hospital on a patient who died suddenly in the fourth week of an attack of typhoid fever. It transpired that his father had smuggled in some grapes, of which he partook, and shortly afterwards was seized with vomiting and collapse. The *post mortem* examination revealed the ordinary condition in such cases—one of the ulcerated patches had perforated the bowel. But most significantly there was found some grape skins in the intestine at the point of rupture. Every Nurse knows how typhoid cases when convalescing have to be watched and guarded not only from the ignorant kindness of their friends, but even from themselves, lest in the craving for food which follows the subsidence of the fever, they should obtain improper articles of diet. I greatly fear that this story will be repeated many times again as it has oftentimes been told before, because the only people who need be warned are too ignorant, or too foolish, or too careless to take heed.

I WONDER if Mrs. Dundas—from whom a most interesting letter on "Village Nursing" appeared last Thursday in the *Times*—has seen the Editorials which have lately appeared in this journal? She describes an Association which is being formed to supply Trained Midwives and Sick Nurses for rural districts remote from Medical aid. The two great difficulties she apprehends will be—First, the "prejudice so often entertained by ignorant people against Trained Nurses coming to their homes;" and, secondly—which she considers the far more serious difficulty—the question of expense. I am inclined to think that Mr. Editor was right, and that to succeed in village Nursing, the Nurse must be a Trained Midwife as well, and, above all, must be drawn from the people amongst whom she is to work. Mrs. Dundas' scheme is excellent in

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