

consideration which he gave to their representations with regard to it. The Council took strong exception to the clause in the Bill providing for the annual licensing of midwives, and it is satisfactory that this clause was subsequently omitted from the Bill, and a system of notification substituted before it passed into law.

It is important to point out that, by the passing of the Midwives' Bill and the State recognition of women as practitioners of midwifery, a sharp line of demarcation has been drawn between midwives and nurses. The practitioners of midwifery form as distinct a profession as do the practitioners of medicine, and education in general or even special nursing is not included in the educational curriculum of either.

It must be borne in mind that the responsibility of diagnosis and treatment is entrusted to the midwife, while the duty of the trained nurse consists in the skilful execution of medical directions as to treatment, and she exceeds her duty, as well as her knowledge, directly she attempts either to diagnose a disease or to treat a patient. The distinction between the work of midwives and nurses is therefore well defined, and the duty of those concerned in the problem of nursing education must be henceforth to provide for the public, efficient medical, surgical, and obstetric nurses, who are competent to care for the patients under medical direction.

It must be noted in this connection that, while a midwife is held competent by the State to deliver cases of normal labour, she is not, by this fact, qualified to give subsequent nursing care to the patient.

The anomalous condition of the relations between trained nurses and midwives is brought into strong relief by the passage of the Midwives' Act.

In its practical working it means that if a thoroughly qualified nurse attends a lying-in case delivered by a midwife, she will have to work under the direction of a practitioner who has passed through a much less complete training than she herself has received.

Another abnormality which must also be mentioned is that, while midwives have no direct representation on the Board by which they are governed, and no provision is made by the Act for the obligatory appointment of even one midwife upon it, provision is made that representatives of two Societies of Nurses, who are not independent practitioners, shall be placed on the Board governing midwives who are.

The Act having passed into law, all which can be done by those who hold that an essential principle in the just government of a profession is the direct representation of the class governed on the Governing Body, is to secure seats allotted to Nursing Bodies for women who hold the double qualification of nurse and midwife. It is satisfac-

tory to be able to record that, by this circuitous means, midwives have been appointed to seats on the Midwives' Board, whilst the Privy Council has, upon this occasion, selected a midwife as the woman it is required to appoint. We are glad, also, to record that two of the midwives who have taken a prominent part in advocating the passing of the Act are included on the Governing Board. We are, however, of opinion that the appointment of midwives on this Board should be an essential part of its Constitution, and not be left to chance to decide.

The Matrons' Council is satisfied that the position it has from the first assumed in relation to the registration of midwives, and which is supported by many progressive medical practitioners, is the right one, and that ideal provision for the future, as well as the present, in relation to the care of obstetric cases is to be found in the combined care of the qualified medical practitioner, and the trained obstetric nurse working under his direction.

NURSING IN THE NAVY.

As it was announced early in the year that Inspector-General Henry C. Woods, M.D., M.V.O., was engaged in preparing a scheme for an increase of the nursing staff in H.M. ships in time of war and national emergency, and that a Reserve of naval nurses, male and female, was to be established, the Council forwarded to the Earl of Selborne, First Lord of the Admiralty, a copy of the memorandum presented to the Admiralty by a deputation of the Matrons' Council in 1900. It is regrettable to have to record that the new Regulations issued in connection with Queen Alexandra's Royal Naval Nursing Service are very disappointing. No Nursing Board and no Matron-in-Chief are appointed, as in the case of the sister Service, and the trend of the whole document is to show a lack of comprehension of the requirements of modern nursing on the part of this Government department.

THE STATE REGISTRATION OF TRAINED NURSES.

At the last annual meeting of the Matrons' Council it was unanimously agreed that the work of organisation in forwarding the movement for the State Registration of Trained Nurses now exceeded the powers of a sub-committee of the Council to undertake. On the proposition of Mrs. Bedford Fenwick, supported by Miss Huxley, Miss Poole, and Miss Marquardt, the principle of the formation of a new Society was unanimously accepted, and the preliminary organisation was deputed to the Registration Sub-Committee. The result has been gratifying and encouraging. The Society was formally launched at a public meeting in May, with Miss Louisa Stevenson as President, Miss Isla Stewart as senior Vice-President, Mrs. Bedford Fenwick as Hon. Secretary and Treasurer, and a number of ladies as Local Hon. Secretaries.

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