

Nursing Echoes.

. All communications must be duly authenticated with name and address, not for publication, but as evidence of good faith, and should be addressed to the Editor, 20, Upper Wimpole Street, W.



A grand concert in aid of the Trained Nurses' Annuity Fund will be held by permission of the Earl and Countess of Ellesmere, at Bridgwater House, on Tuesday, July 10.

An advertisement in the Press on behalf of the London County Council for a woman inspector in its Public Health Department under the Midwives' Act, 1902, has occasioned a letter in the *British Medical Journal* from Dr. Percy Rose, who urges (1) that the duties involved can only be efficiently and safely performed by a registered medical practitioner who has had years of experience of midwifery work; (2) that a maximum of £250 per annum for a whole time appointment will not attract that class of practitioner; (3) to appoint a midwife to such a post would be to ask impossibilities of her. From Hampstead to Woolwich, from Wandsworth to Bow, this midwife would be expected to have a personal acquaintance with every midwife in London, and to be prepared to assist, advise, or instruct the lot. Whether the midwives would relish this form of assistance from a sister midwife, is another question.

The conclusion Dr. Rose arrives at is that the London County Council should re-advertise the post, throwing it open only to registered medical practitioners, and that they would find it difficult to secure the whole time services of an experienced practitioner without offering a much larger salary. As an alternative, he suggests ten or twelve district inspectors at a proportionate salary from the ranks of general practitioners of experience.

We agree with Dr. Rose, and with the *British Medical Journal* which supports him, in considering that it would be better if the duties were divided between more people, but we disagree with him in considering that a midwife is an unsuitable person to hold the appointment, and if impossibilities are involved in asking a midwife to cover the required ground

the same thing applies equally to a medical practitioner, for the area involved is the same in one case as the other.

The duties involved do not include accompanying the midwife to a case of labour, and instructing her in the work of delivery. They do include supervising and visiting her in her own home, reporting as to the cleanliness of her house and her person, whether she is provided with washing dresses, with the appliances she must, under the rules of the Central Midwives Board, take to a case, whether she keeps a register of cases, whether she is able to take a temperature, and generally to assist the Medical Officer of Health under whose supervision she works, to give effect to the provisions of the Act. Are these the kind of duties to which a competent medical practitioner who has received a scientific education would desire to give her whole time? The insinuation that midwives would not care to be superintended by one of their own number is quite unworthy. Further it is as reasonable to argue that nurses resent being superintended by one of their own profession, whereas it is well-known that the highest efficiency is only attainable where this is the case.

Only experience can prove whether midwives will make efficient superintendents of midwives. From the limited observation already possible we have no hesitation in saying that they will. The best undoubtedly will be those who are also trained nurses and we believe that the superintendents working in connection with the Queen Victoria's Jubilee Institute are a valuable class upon which to draw. We hope the London County Council will give the midwives a fair trial before re-advertising the post at "a much larger salary."

Nurses in private practice at the West-End may be glad to know that Miss Weeks and Miss Pryce Browne, who have taken a flat at 62A, Goodge Street, W., are prepared to let rooms on reasonable terms by the day, week, or permanently. Miss Weeks is herself a trained nurse, who has done private work and so understands the exigencies of private nurses' life, and is, therefore, likely to make them comfortable.

Miss Johanna Augusta Catherine Coates, an elderly white-haired lady who recently appeared before Mr. Justice Warrington in connection with a case in the Chancery Division said she was a trained nurse and had served in the Franco-German War and also in

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