

the very authority who has to know the true state of things, it is losing confidence in them.

I quite agree with "Certified Midwife" that "without the direction of the C.M.B a wise midwife would call in medical assistance" when necessary; but I object to her being told to do so without using her own discretion, and to give an account, as it is required of persons on ticket-of-leave, of every step she makes, under pain of being struck off the Roll—not by a decision of her peers, as it is the privilege of every member in any other profession, but by people who are out of sympathy with her. The C.M.B. ought at least to have conceded that the midwife knows as much of her work as to when to call in a doctor, this being part of her training.

Yours obediently,

H. G.

To the Editor of the "British Journal of Nursing."

DEAR MADAM,—There is no doubt that the midwives are in a very helpless position, and I am glad to learn from your broad-minded paper that Manchester midwives are showing us the way of self-help by forming an Association for Mutual Benefit and Protection. This is just what we want. Now, owing to the fact that we have no centre of co-operation we are unable to help ourselves in any way; and the sad part of it is that the Midwives' Act is a most unjust measure, and quite out of touch with the age, omitting, as it does, to give any direct representation to the thousands of women working as midwives whose whole life it controls in the most absolute manner. The whole thing is quite un-British, or it is so, where men are concerned. The pettifogging personal interference of many of the inspectors who treat experienced midwives like children is unbearable—at least that is my experience—the more so I regret to add where the inspector is a medical woman. What we want is to agitate for direct representation on the Central Midwives' Board—we want midwives on it who have had to earn their living at the work—and not ladies who have never earned a midwifery fee in their lives. I hope "H. G.'s" letters will arouse interest in the matter.

I am, yours sincerely,

AN L. O. S. MIDWIFE.

To the Editor of the "British Journal of Nursing."

DEAR MADAM,—I have followed with interest the discussion of the suggestion for a Midwives' Defence Union in the columns of your valuable journal. I should like to say, however, as I notice that one of your correspondents thinks that since the Midwives' Act came into force her position as a midwife has deteriorated, that this has not been my experience. I find that whereas in the past all I could point to as a guarantee of my efficiency was a certificate given by a private medical Society, I can now show that I have a recognised State qualification. If, for any reason, one has to appear in a court of law this stands one in very good stead, for it is proof at once that one has taken the trouble to attain the defined and recognised standard for a midwife, and my experience is that one receives increased con-

sideration in consequence. Legal courts understand legal qualifications, though they attach no value to private certificates, and they know that in its degree the qualification of the midwife is just as valid as that of the medical practitioner. It is, of course, a much lower degree, but, nevertheless, both doctor and midwife, in their respective professions, receive the *imprimatur* of the State.

Please do not imagine that I think the Midwives' Act a perfect specimen of legislation. On the contrary—the sooner a Midwives' Act Amendment Bill providing for the direct representation of midwives on the body which governs them the better I shall be pleased—but from my experience of its working I am inclined to think that any legislation is better than no legislation.

Yours faithfully,

JUSTICE ALL ROUND.

To the Editor of the "British Journal of Nursing."

MADAM,—Your correspondent "H. G." does not appear to know that the Incorporated Midwives' Institute exists. Instead of rushing into print it would have been far wiser for her to have appealed for help to the Institute, where she would have received advice. If a Midwives' Defence League is started it should be done by the Incorporated Midwives' Institute. It is useless to suggest that midwives should have direct representation on the Central Board, the medical faculty will never agree to it, and I fear you are raising false hopes by suggesting such radical views. Let all midwives join the Institute and be content to be guided by those who have worked through the "midwives' agitation," and who know how difficult it was to have its members represented at all, even by a medical man.

Yours,

A WORKER FOR MIDWIVES.

[Why should all midwives be "content to be guided?" That they should have rights of conscience appears to us not only feasible, but imperative. We are all for personal responsibility and self-government, and don't believe in spoon-fed midwives. The whole pappy atmosphere which surrounds the midwife and trained nurse is obsolete; it is an economic phase which must be justly dealt with, and put on a right industrial basis. If the Incorporated Midwives' Institute is sufficiently advanced to take this view by all means let it organise a self-governing Midwives' Defence League, but it must realise the difficulties ahead. Usually, at an inquest where a midwife's management or conduct is impugned, the medical officer and the patient's family are legally represented. The poor midwife cannot afford to defend herself even if in the right, and she therefore generally goes to the wall. Even if she is wrong she should have the benefit of the doubt until she has been *proved guilty*.—ED.]

A METROPOLITAN MIDWIVES' DEFENCE ASSOCIATION.

To the Editor of the "British Journal of Nursing."

DEAR MADAM,—Will you allow me through the medium of the BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING, to call the

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