

	Not Practising	Notifying Intention to Practise during 1908.	Total.
Class (a) ...	1,392	206	1,598
Class (b) ...	716	204	920
Class (c) ...	64	108	172
	2,172	518	2,690

Many of the 204 midwives in class (b), who notified their intention to practise, were newly qualified, and were working for short periods at the institutions where they were trained prior to taking up practice in other parts of England, or going abroad.

From the above figures it will be seen that less than 20 per cent. of the midwives residing in London are practising. The remainder for the most part act as monthly nurses under the direction of medical practitioners.

Of the practising midwives, some 25 reside at, and work in connection with, lying-in hospitals or Poor Law Infirmaries, and are under the supervision of medical practitioners. Others living in their own homes attend patients on behalf of charitable institutions, which pay them fees for each case allotted to them, a few taking no other cases, while others are also engaged in independent private practice. The rest practise independently, or work in lying-in institutions not under direct medical supervision.

Three practising midwives died, 12 gave up practice, and 27 removed from the county during the year.

The Rotunda Hospital, Dublin.

Dr. Lombe Atthill, continuing his reminiscences in the *British Medical Journal*, gives the following details in regard to the nursing staff at the Rotunda Hospital, Dublin, on his appointment as Master in 1875:—

"There was not a trained nurse in the house except the 'head midwife,' whose main business was to supervise the female pupils, who were trained in midwifery only; they picked up from the ward nurses such knowledge of the nursing of lying-in women as the nurses were willing or able to impart. The ward nurses were always respectable elderly women of good character, selected by the Matron, and put in charge of a ward when a vacancy occurred, without any previous training. Some of these, I found, could neither read nor write. Their wages, too, were but £10 a year. They provided their own clothing, and as their laundry expenses were not provided for, they were in the habit of washing their underclothing, etc., in their wards, during the interval between the discharge of one batch of patients and the admission of the next. Their dresses, being black, were never washed, and were worn till they could no longer be held together; not that you ever saw a nurse in rags, they always looked respectable.

"As I could not think of discharging these women, some of whom, indeed, were worthy of trust, I made the following suggestions to the governors, which they approved of:—First, that the nurses should be divided into three classes. Two, selected by me, to receive £20 a year each, the second class to receive £16, and the third £14; all to be provided with uniform, and laundry expenses paid. No washing to be permitted in the wards.

"All were pleased at the prospect of better pay. Some objected to the division into classes, and most of them to being obliged to wear uniform. Indeed, the head midwife was much opposed to this innovation, specially as it applied equally to the pupil midwives; and she gravely protested against 'the poor things being obliged to wear calico dresses in winter.' Yet she was a most intelligent, and, in other respects, most trustworthy, woman; but she was a great conservative, and considered wearing uniform derogatory to her pupils. As to herself, she was not asked to wear it. I knew she would have resigned sooner than do so.

"The new rules worked very well. Some of the oldest and least efficient nurses, being disgusted at not being selected for the first class, said that if they were given a gratuity they would resign. Their application was granted, and so I got rid of one or two inefficient without causing trouble; and before my term as Master expired I could not have wished for a better staff than I had.

"The Matron was a nice old lady, a widow, who had formerly been in a good social position. She wished to do right, but had not had any previous training, and had no idea of what the duties of a hospital Matron should be. She walked through the wards once daily to see if they were clean, etc., but with this exception her duties were really those of a housekeeper. It remained for my then assistant, Dr. (now Sir William) Smyly, to again reorganise the nursing staff. Acting on his advice when, some years later (in 1889), he was elected Master, the Board abolished the office of head midwife, and appointed, as Lady Superintendent, a trained nurse, with Sisters, nurses, and probationers under her, as in other hospitals. I, being then a member of the Board of Governors, was able to support him in this and other improvements, for the carrying out of which he deserves the greatest credit."

The Central Midwives' Board Examinations.

The next examination of the Central Midwives' Board will be held on February 15th, in London, at the Examination Hall, Victoria Embankment, W.C., also in Birmingham, at the University; in Bristol, at University College; in Manchester, at Victoria University; and in Newcastle-on-Tyne, at the University of Durham College of Medicine. Also at Leeds—the new centre—by the kind permission of the University authorities, who have offered all the necessary facilities, the examination will be held at the University.

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