

The New Midwives' Bill.

It is not only the midwives, but medical practitioners, who are agitated concerning the provisions of the new Midwives' Bill, to judge by a correspondence on the matter in the *British Medical Journal*.

Dr. James Hamilton wants the opinion of his *confrères* on the following point:—

"Is it to the advantage or is it just and right to the medical profession that medical men should for the sake of a small payment give their services as lecturers and teachers to nursing homes to train midwives, and thus enable them to compete with our profession? It is to my mind as wrong as it would be for a veterinary surgeon to train farriers how to treat animal diseases."

Dr. Fred W. James calls attention to the following advertisement from a certain London suburb:—

Nursing and Midwifery Institute —————.
Patients supplied with midwife, monthly nurse, or visiting nurse. In-patients taken, both general and maternity. Attendance by doctor or midwife, fees arranged, strictly moderate. Maternity club, Nurse —————, certified midwife.

He writes:—

"When the matter was brought to the notice of the Central Midwives' Board, their secretary replied that neither the advertisement nor the circular infringed the regulations of the Board.

"It is therefore open to these women to advertise as much as they please—a fact which demonstrates the need of drastic revision both of the "regulations" and of the Board responsible for them.

"Under the limitations imposed by the Act it is impossible for a midwife to carry on a considerable practice without the assistance of medical men. It is difficult to believe that the men who habitually assist the midwife and live in her immediate neighbourhood are ignorant of the nature of her advertisement.

"In return for their complaisance the nurse's medical friends receive the benefit of her touting advertisement, in which she offers the services of a doctor. However one may deprecate their methods, it does not lay the men open to any action by the General Medical Council, as there is no direct evidence of a financial understanding between them and the advertising midwife. Apparently, therefore, under the present rules of the game, it is open to midwives to advertise themselves and their medical backers without laying either class open to any consequences whatever."

The item in the advertisement to which we take the most exception is the admittance to the institution of both general and maternity cases. The lying-in woman thus runs great risks, as there is neither inspection nor control of nursing homes at present, and we know that every sort of slipshod method is often employed unchecked.

Very few nurses know anything about sanitation, and are therefore at the mercy of the jerry-builder.

Free Midwifery Training.

It is reported in *Kai Tiaki* that in order to make some effort to supply the great need of well trained midwives in the country districts in New Zealand, the Government has offered two free scholarships each term in the St. Helens State Maternity Hospitals, for country women who cannot afford to come to town and pay the fees for training.

It is found that, although a fairly large number of midwives are being turned out yearly in these training schools, yet the country districts are not much better off; the reason being that so much work offers in the towns that the pupil nurses are offered engagements months ahead, even before they complete their training, so that even those girls who come from the country prefer to remain in town.

The free scholarships are being given to remedy this. A candidate must be recommended by the Hospital Board of the district; she must agree with the Board to work where she is most required in the district for at least two years. If she has her home in that part so much the better; if not, at the end of two years, she is likely to be so established that she will remain there if she gets sufficient work to do. As in many parts midwifery work may be irregular, and cases not frequent enough to bring a sufficient income, the women who are best suited for these scholarships are the wives and daughters of farmers and other settlers, who will be able to attend the cases around them, but who are not entirely dependent on this work. The first pupil on this arrangement is shortly entering St. Helen's Hospital, Auckland.

The State Examination of pupils trained under the "Midwives' Act" is held in Wellington, Dunedin, Auckland, and Christchurch, and the training which consists of six months' work in the St. Helen's Maternity Hospitals in these cities is of a very practical nature.

A MATERNITY HOSPITAL NEEDED AT NAIROBI.

An appeal is being made, supported by Princess Christian, President of the South African Colonisation Society, and of the Earl of Crewe, Secretary of State for the Colonies, to provide a maternity home at Nairobi in British East Africa. Owing to the increase of European settlement the want of such a home is being keenly felt, and a great effort is being made locally to provide one.

The home would also receive surgical cases from amongst the women of the white population who could not be treated at home, and would provide accommodation for a Matron and two nurses.

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