

## MIDWIFE OR NURSE.

We publish in our report of the monthly meeting of the Central Midwives Board an extract from the Annual Report of the Medical Officer of Health for the Borough of Launceston, forwarded to the Central Midwives Board by the Local Government Board.

It will be noted that the writer of the Report states that the object of the Midwives Act is "to endeavour to reduce the mortality of women dying in child-birth, and to protect the lives of newly-born infants by preventing mothers placing their lives in the hands of *untrained and unskilful nurses*." That since the Midwives Act came into force none of the women who formerly acted as midwives have endeavoured to obtain the qualifying certificate of the Central Midwives Board. The town is *therefore* without the services of a *single certificated nurse*.

It will be noted that a Government Department—the Local Government Board—made no comment on the assumption in the Report that the Central Midwives Board controls trained nurses, and that the Board itself took no steps to repudiate it.

When the Central Midwives Board allows such a statement to pass unchallenged, it is not surprising that the general public do not appreciate the difference between the midwife and the skilled nurse. Again, it is no uncommon thing to hear a member of the Central Midwives Board, when discussing the desirability or otherwise of retaining a midwife on the Roll, say, "She is not fit for the responsibility of a midwife; let her act as a nurse."

The three months' midwife also is quite ready to say to the nurse of three years' standing, "My qualification is higher than yours, because I can act without a doctor and you mayn't."

The result is that the certificate of the Central Midwives Board is coming to be regarded as an easy passport to the nursing world, and local nursing associations consider all is well if they engage a certified midwife with a smattering of nursing to nurse the sick poor.

While the midwife is required by the rules of the Central Midwives Board to give all necessary directions for securing the comfort and proper dieting of the mother and child during the lying-in period, she is not a nurse in the sense that she is trained to take the responsible charge of the sick, child-birth being a normal process in the healthy. The trouble arises from the fact that Parliament has protected the title of midwife; and a woman practising midwifery, unless certified under the Midwives Act, is liable to a penalty of £5.

No such protection as is given to the three months' midwife is extended to the nurse who spends three years in obtaining a thorough training in the nursing care of the sick. So far Parliament has not granted legal status to the trained nurses, who are indispensable alike to Government Services and to the public, and there is no protected title of registered nurse. Consequently anyone may use the title of nurse, and the *bonâ-fide* midwife, who, when not engaged at maternity cases, frequently earns an honest living by going charing, has a more definite position in the body politic than the educated and highly skilled trained nurse.

## THE GLASGOW MATERNITY HOSPITAL.

Mrs. B. M. Grillo, writing in the *Glasgow Herald*, makes a forcible appeal for support for the Glasgow Maternity Hospital, which is badly in need of funds. She writes:—"Doctors and women know the vital importance at such a time of skilled assistance and hygienic surroundings, and the resultant saving of life, and often also of disease and deformity. The doctors are doing their part nobly; it is for the women to rise to their duty and remove this great incubus—lack of funds. Mr. Lloyd George may overtax in his efforts to enforce charity, but there still should be the spontaneous freewill offering of a grateful heart; and so I would suggest that an appeal should be made for any sum from 5s. to £5 5s. or over, to be given by mothers in the middle and upper classes of society as a thankoffering to Almighty God for their own safety and comfortable surroundings at such times, and as a practical proof of their sympathy with their poorer sisters in their hour of trial. Nor would I limit these freewill offerings to mothers, but urge everyone to send a donation, great or small, who in looking back to his or her childhood with affection can say: 'I thank God I had a good mother.'"

## THE LAST WORDS FOR 1911.

He had thought and it set Him smiling  
Of the shape of a bird and its glancing head,  
Its dainty air and its grace beguiling;  
"I will make feathers," the Lord God said.

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Dearlings, He said, make songs for My praises!  
He tossed them loose to the sun and the wind,  
Airily sweet as pansies and daisies;  
He taught them to build a nest to their mind.

*The Making of Birds.*

KATHARINE TYNAN.

Gather ye roses while ye may:  
Old time is still a-flying.

The year is drawing to an end,  
And Christmas glow is waning fast,  
But unto it doth memory lend  
A soft radiance to the last.  
Ah, soon the flowers will wake anew,  
And soon about your feet  
Their petals, open fresh with dew,  
Will make your pathway sweet;  
And I shall wish that all fair things  
That make life bright and dear  
May come to you as Time's swift wings  
Bring in the glad New Year.

H. M. BURNSIDE.

Keep your face always towards the sunshine  
and the shadows will fall behind you.

There is a Bond betwixt us not of Yesterday.