

cases prescribed by the examining bodies. At present, Medical Students experience the great difficulty in this part of their education. As many as five or ten go to one lying-in woman, and by repeated examinations worry and irritate her. A clause, therefore, should be introduced providing that no Pupil Midwives be trained where there is just sufficient clinical material for Students. It is to be hoped the Medical Council will look to this important point. It is of much more importance to the public than to the profession, that nothing shall happen which will lower the educational status of the practitioner.

*Third*, the number of Midwives. I think the advocates of this Bill said there should be one Midwife to every two thousand persons; therefore about twenty-four thousand three hundred and thirty will be required—as well as the twenty-four thousand Doctors! Abroad, the number of Midwives is strictly limited, either because the Government educates and supports them, or that no extra pupils are trained until those nominated by the Local Government are educated. A clause should be inserted providing that the Central Body write to all those Institutions at which pupils are educated, notifying when there is more than one Midwife to every two hundred women between the ages of twenty-one and forty-five.

I trust I have shown cause why legislation on this subject should be carefully considered. Many are opposed to Registration, and to the creation of a separate class of Midwifery practitioners. At present there is a rage for registering Monthly Nurses, Masseurs and Sick Nurses of all kinds—male and female. Probably the St. John's Ambulance members will soon agitate to be placed on a Government Register. Do these not practise Surgery up to a certain point? Why not also the quacks, unqualified assistants, and prescribing Chemists? These are as much used by the public as are Midwives, and probably do more harm. Certainly they must have the right to register, and no doubt they will soon blossom out as the Incorporate Society of Quacks, or the Institute of Unqualified Assistants and Prescribing Chemists. Why not? They can all prove that the country employs them and has employed them from time immemorial. Let them cause just sufficient misery to be a public nuisance, they will then be legislated for; but with this refined distinction—they will continue to work under Act of Parliament. Britons are law-loving mortals, while liberty and license are synonymous terms with some.

If the young Medical Practitioner has not sufficient "normal labours" wherewith to complete his imperfect education, how will he be

competent to conduct "abnormal" cases? Fancy the outcry which would be raised if the ground-work of education were cut away from young Surgeons, Physicians, Dentists, and Chemists. Do we not all now see how the average young medical man suffers, and the public through him, simply because he has too little training in the compounding and dispensing of medicines, and in the practical work of his profession? This has been taken from him and given to the Chemist. Similarly the ground-work of his training will be taken and given to the Pupil Midwife and the Midwife. And with what result to the public? To make matters worse, many advocates of Registration say that young Doctors should not accept a smaller fee than two guineas. But if a young Doctor accepts ten shillings from a person whom he knows cannot pay more, and instead of leading a useless, lazy life, works up his knowledge, is he not justified in acting? or is the Doctor who treats a woman "for nothing" at the charity the hero, and the other a low fellow?

I would point out that many pregnant women, suffering from either heart, lung, or kidney disease, tumours, deformities, and diseases due to pregnancy, or from some malpresentation of the child, are frequently saved, because a diseased condition is recognised and treated in time. How could such benefit by Midwives, or how could they detect any of these conditions? What Doctor or advocate of this Bill would trust a wife to such? No doubt they would not trust theirs; but they will hand over poor women. Moreover, as civilization advances the accidents of child-birth multiply. Even to-day the Obstetrician is so certain it is the unexpected which may occur, that he goes prepared for all emergencies. And this "unexpected" is sudden, sharp, quick, and so deathful, that, if it is not met at once, direful results will surely follow. But how will the placing of all the self-styled Midwives now practising on an official Register improve them?

Many deeply regret this attempt at levelling down. Midwifery has been taken from the lowest depths, and placed on a level with the other branches of scientific medicine. Would it not be more productive of good if we first gave the public thoroughly trained men and women Doctors and useful Monthly Nurses? How many maternal deaths are due to careless Nursing? A new class of Midwifery Practitioners will bring about results evil to all. The education of the general practitioner has greatly improved. Let us not do anything to hinder its progress.

Not only do some entice a class of patients to the Medical Charity so as to starve out the general practitioner, but they now actually strive to hand

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)