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IMPORTANT NOTICE.—Those of our subscribers who wish to notify change of address must send such notification in order that it may reach the publishers NOT LATER than the Monday morning before publishing, otherwise the change cannot be made.

EDITORIAL.

THE REGISTRATION OF MIDWIVES.—VI.

WE publish this week, at Dr. RENTOUL'S earnest request, a long letter from that energetic reformer, as he is desirous that Trained Nurses throughout the Kingdom should understand exactly the principles upon which he opposes the recent Midwives' Registration Bill. Upon the latter part of his communication, however, we would only express our opinion that his proposition to increase the number of direct representatives of the Medical profession upon the General Medical Council is in entire consonance with the spirit of the age. When one looks back, for example, sixty years, to the days when the nation was governed by a House of Commons largely composed of the nominees of a few great territorial magnates, and then remembers that manhood suffrage is now in the region of practical politics, it becomes apparent that democracy is dominant, and that it is probably only a question of time when the General Medical Council, like every other governing body, will be elected, not by this corporation, or by that

authority, but by the universal suffrages of the governed. It appears to us, therefore, that Dr. RENTOUL is working with the tide of public opinion, and will certainly obtain his present very moderate wish for an increase of three more direct representatives of the Medical profession. Nay, more, we deem it no rash prophecy to foretell that when the next Medical Bill is drafted, it will probably provide for a majority of the Members of the Council to be elected directly by the medical men of the country.

In like manner we cannot but believe that Dr. RENTOUL has not only right, but reason, on his side in the plea which he so strongly advances for an improvement in the Midwifery education of Medical Students. It is only within the last thirty years that the importance of this branch has been recognised at all. Prior to that it was presumed that every Student somehow acquired a practical knowledge of Midwifery, and that all medical schools in some manner provided for the due instruction of their pupils in its theory and practice. But it was little more than a presumption, and precisely for the same reason that it is at this present day only a presumption that the Hospitals teach their Probationers Nursing. Because there were then for medical men—what there are now for Nurses—no rules of education laid down by an authority legally empowered to enforce them. As soon as the General Medical Council insisted that Midwifery was an essential part of the Student's education, the examining bodies were compelled to test his knowledge of the subject, and then each school was for the first time obliged to make it an integral part of its curriculum, or its Students would have failed in their examinations, and very soon the school itself would have ceased to exist, because learners would have gone elsewhere to gain the necessary knowledge.

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