

To digress for one moment, it may be noticed with interest that this is an argument which has not hitherto been advanced in these columns in favour of the Registration of Nurses. Because the authority appointed by law to control the system would, as a matter of course, exercise a great moral influence upon the training and examination of those who desired to be Registered. By refusing the benefits of enrolment upon the Register to those who did not reach a certain standard—and one which all experience shows would almost certainly be continually heightened—every Nurse Training School would be compelled, for fear of falling behind other Hospitals in public estimation, to educate each of its Probationers up to the standard enforced by the Registration authority, and to which therefore other schools would certainly seek to attain. This, therefore, is one of the many ways in which Registration would advantage not only Nurses but the general public also. Because it is clearly for the benefit of all, whether rich or poor, that a healthy rivalry should be established amongst Hospitals, and that each should strive to make its workers better attendants upon the sick than those at every other Institution.

So once more we believe that Dr. RENTOUL is proposing an advance in practical education which is strongly in accord with the current of medical education for some years past. We have upon more than one occasion, lately, noticed in these columns that the General Medical Council has announced its wish to see the term of pupillage lengthened from four years to five. From which, seeing that no fresh subjects of study are proposed, it may be deduced that the opinion of the Council is that more time should be given to the various sections of the curriculum than has hitherto been allowed. And if a longer period of study be insisted upon, it can only imply that the necessity of a more thorough knowledge is recognised. Dr. RENTOUL, it appears to us, is therefore claiming for the study of Obstetrics in especial that wider knowledge which the General Medical Council last year asserted to be necessary in each branch of the healing art. Inasmuch, then, as he is in touch with the Council, and there is reason to believe with very many of the medical examining bodies, also, the probability is very great that his wish will sooner rather than later be gratified, and that medical students in future will be better trained in Midwifery than they have hitherto been. But the lesson which Dr. RENTOUL evidently desires to teach is, that it is for the benefit of women in childbirth that their attendants should be better qualified than they are at present, and as there is a necessity that medical students should obtain a better

acquaintance with Obstetrics, so there is an overpowering need that Midwives throughout the length and breadth of the kingdom should be better educated for the performance of their vital duties. Whereas it is plain, beyond disproof, that if the Bill drafted by the Midwives' Institute had become law, a race of workers would have been legalised, and perpetuated, who would have been infinitely less qualified than many of those now at work. In fact, the standard of knowledge would actually have been lowered, instead of raised, and the first effect of legislation would have been to increase rather than diminish the number of ignorant Midwives, and the consequent danger to parturient women.

We go beyond Dr. RENTOUL in one thing, for we consider that it would distinctly be for the good of medical men, as well as of the public, that Midwives should be legally Registered and controlled. And for that very reason it appears to us that the Midwives' Institute has been lamentably misled and ill-advised in proposing such a measure as that which we have criticised in these columns. We suggest that it would be well for the Government to undertake the scheme, and to introduce on its own responsibility a more workable and comprehensive measure. To meet the one practical objection as to the difficulty of giving Midwives sufficient experience in conducting labours, we would suggest a modification of Dr. RENTOUL's proposal that the Lying-in Wards of the Poor Law Infirmaries should be utilised for teaching medical students. Miss CLOSE showed, during her period of office as Matron at the Kensington Infirmary, how invaluable a school for Midwives could be formed in such an Institution. And now, when it is proposed far and wide that the clinical material of the Poor Law should be thrown open for medical education, we suggest that certain large London and Provincial Hospitals, with their thousands of confinement cases yearly, might well be organised into training schools for Midwives. If this was done; if the general education of the workers was compelled to be more than "a fair elementary" one; if competent professional authorities were deputed to examine, and certificate, and Register Midwives, then, and then only, might matters be improved, the public be benefited, and the medical profession suffer no wrong.

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A BLESSING beyond wealth, beyond beauty, or even beyond talent is that cheerful temperament which can rejoice in the sunshine, yet be merry in the shade—which can delight in the singing of the birds in spring, yet solace itself with the heart's own music when winter is at hand.

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