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EDITORIAL.

DUMPED INTO THE NURSING PROFESSION.

It will be remembered that at the last Session of the General Medical Council three medical men were cited to appear in connection with the covering of uncertified midwives, the prosecution being conducted in each case by the Central Midwives Board, proving that when a profession is organized steps can be taken to protect its interests; for whether these proceedings were taken for the protection of lying-in women, or in the interests of certified midwives, the fact remains that the machinery exists for effectively dealing with abuses. In two cases the President of the General Medical Council informed the practitioner concerned that the Council took a very serious view of the nature of the offence, and, in the third, the extreme penalty of removal from the Register was inflicted.

Further, the General Medical Council proposes to issue a warning notice against the "covering" of practice by uncertified women, and local authorities are already issuing notices of the same nature. The legitimate interests of certified midwives in this respect are therefore protected.

It is of interest and importance to trained nurses to realize what happens when certified midwives are removed from the Roll, or voluntarily resign for reasons which seem good to them; or because pressure is brought to bear upon them by local supervising authorities so to do.

Recently a medical practitioner wrote to the Chairman of the Central Midwives Board, asking his opinion as to whether he was "covering an uncertified midwife." He wrote that "Mrs. —, who was in practice before the Act, and who has since been crossed off the Roll, or, to be strictly accurate, has resigned, still acts as a nurse, and tells everybody who comes to her that

she cannot act without a doctor, and sends all the people to me. Am I justified in going to them?"

The correspondence arising out of this letter has, by the direction of the President of the General Medical Council, and the Chairman of the Central Midwives Board, been sent to the medical press.

Sir Francis Champneys, in defining for this medical man what should be his attitude to this ex-midwife, writes:—"There is nothing to prevent Mrs. — from acting as a *monthly nurse* under your orders. You are responsible for the cases, and for Mrs. — nursing of them."

Thus the nursing profession becomes the dumping ground of bona-fide midwives removed, either at their own request or otherwise, from the Midwives Roll, while even if they have had no training in nursing there is nothing to prevent them from acting as monthly nurses, undistinguishable from those who have spent years in attaining knowledge and skill.

Is nursing a skilled profession or is it not? If it is then there could hardly be a stronger argument for the State Registration of trained nurses than the official pronouncement of the Chairman of the Central Midwives Board that there is nothing to prevent unfrocked midwives from acting as monthly nurses.

The effect of the protection of the title of Registered Nurse would be the same as that of the title of Registered Medical Practitioner under the Medical Acts, the public would know that registered persons had attained the standard required by the recognized professional authority; and that if they employed an unregistered person they did so at their own risk.

Moreover, registered nurses would have some reason for refusing to work for medical practitioners who ignored their legal status and covered untrained nurses.

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