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EDITORIAL.

MIDWIVES—OR OBSTETRIC NURSES?—I.

THIS is now the question before the Medical and Nursing professions, and for many reasons we are extremely glad that such a clear and distinct issue has been raised. It is announced that the British Gynecological Society—one of the largest and most influential Medical Societies in the country—is about to institute examinations for Obstetric and Monthly Nurses and grant diplomas to those candidates who satisfy its Examining Board of their efficiency, character, and technical knowledge. Some three weeks ago, when discussing the subject of the

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Registration of Midwives, we advised the formation of a powerful but private body of Medical Men and Midwives to commence the work of Registration on the same lines as those so admirably laid down by the Royal British Nurses' Association for the conduct of its system. For we pointed out that, at present, there is a complete lack of the necessary data upon which Parliamentary action could be safely or wisely undertaken; and indeed that it is doubtless from this want of knowledge of the subject that the promoters of the present Bill have made such egregious mistakes in drafting its provisions. This new scheme, if carried out, would clearly be most useful as a preparation for the work of such a Board as we suggested; and would have the great additional advantages that it would necessarily throw increased light on the subject, tend very greatly to raise the training and education of women desirous to work as Midwives or Monthly Nurses, and therefore be of the highest usefulness to the large class who are, and probably always will be, dependent on the assistance of these workers.

The latter result may be taken as self-evident, and a very brief consideration of the subject will show the probabilities of the other consequences which we have predicted. Because, in the first place, the essential object of Registration is to register something. In the case of Medical men the qualification for enrolment consists in the possession of a diploma or degree granted by a Corporation or University duly authorised by the law to grant such certificate of knowledge. In the case of Nurses we understand that a term

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