

AMONGST other statements, Dr. RENTOUL said: He was at one time connected with a Hospital where they had a very low death-rate from puerperal fever, but that was done by the puerperal patients, who were expected to die, being removed after a certain time to the medical Wards, and then they were able to say that there had not been one death during the year from puerperal fever. Mr. RATHBONE immediately fitted the cap on to the Brownlow Hill Infirmary, for which I should imagine that Institution would not be especially grateful.

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THIS reminds me of the condition of things at that self-same Infirmary years ago—when Miss AGNES JONES (the most heroic Nurse who ever lived) first became its Matron. Such a disgrace to civilisation can now hardly be conceived, and I know I am retailing truth when I say that, after her death, when a short history of her life was to be published, her Sisters were besought not to reveal the horrors of the Augean stables which she had swept out. An old friend of mine, one of the good women who went to Liverpool with her to help to inaugurate reforms, told me she should never forget the condition in which they found the patients—the helpless and imbeciles were housed in a loft-like Ward at the top of the house, wallowing like pigs on straw, their poor bodies covered with sores, and devoured by vermin. She says that the Nurses had to pin up their skirts above the knee, and upturn their sleeves to the elbow, before beginning the herculean task of cleansing that pest-house. But they did cleanse it, though the process cost the valuable life of AGNES JONES—a heroine of whom our Nurses of to-day know too little, and whose bright example it would be well for the world that they should follow.

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FROM *The British Medical Journal* I take the evidence of Dr. ATTHILL, because he insists upon the importance of a lengthened training for Midwives before Registration, which is the point I have always contended for, and also because of the prominence given to mock modesty in women by the advocates of the Bill, which I feel sure does not exist at times of child-birth:—

Dr. ATTHILL, of Dublin, formerly an I for many years Master of the Rotunda Hospital in that city, said it was forty-three years since first he became connected with the Rotunda, of which he was Master till a short time ago. He was most anxious to improve the education of women in Midwifery, but he strongly objected to Registration. He objected to Registration for these reasons: (1) because it would be absolutely essential to put a certain number of women now in practice, but who were wholly illiterate, and sometimes of very doubtful character, on the Register, and they would be given a Certificate of considerable value; (2)

they would put on the Register a number of women whose education would be very partial indeed; (3) if they had a Register they would have to purge it from time to time, and from his experience that was a most troublesome and costly thing; (4) no Registration would prevent the practice of unqualified women at all. The Act known as the Medical Registration Act had not in the least decreased the number of unqualified medical men. The women would be engaged, as now, simply because they could be obtained cheaper. At present, medical men were controlled by the profession; but how would these women be controlled? For one hundred and thirty years Midwives had been trained at the Rotunda Hospital, Dublin, but they were not Registered. Registration was not of the slightest use, but education certainly was. It was beginning at the wrong end to propose to Register the Midwives. In England, the education of medical students was very imperfect; in Ireland it was much better. It should be borne in mind that they were going to deal with women of the domestic servant class—ladies would not go into Midwifery. It was proposed to give Certificates after three months' training. Why, the women would not learn the mere terms in that time. Instead of three months, it should be more like three years. If the Bill were passed, the women should not only be trained, but put through careful examinations. If the examinations were put under the County Councils, it would be a farce, if not a fraud. He put the average of deaths during accouchement at 0.25 per cent. "A little knowledge is a dangerous thing." Dr. ATTHILL continued that imperfectly-trained women were dangerous in the sick room. He would rather put his wife under an absolutely ignorant woman than under one with a smattering of knowledge.

The CHAIRMAN: Quite so.

WITNESS: About the only fatal cases I have met with were caused by women of that class. It is a disgrace that our medical corporations do not insist upon sounder training. In the Rotunda, in my time, we had about 3,500 cases per year, and, besides the male, there were some fifty women, students every year. I have been forty-five years in practice, and I do not know what is a natural labour yet; and still there are cases laid down in which women should or should not send for the doctor.

The CHAIRMAN: You have not any disadvantage in mixing the students?

WITNESS: Not the slightest, Sir. Nearly all women prefer males to attend them; it may be because it is the custom of the country. In our two Hospitals in Dublin—the Rotunda, which is much the larger, and the Coombe—there are between 5,000 and 6,000 women delivered by male students every year. They prefer the males to the females.

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It is reported that the final Report of the Select Committee of the House of Lords on Metropolitan Hospitals will strongly recommend the formation of a Central Board for the Hospitals of London, for the control of some important matters of general administration. I sincerely hope this is true, that the Nursing Department will be included in these "important matters," and that Nursing Committees to take charge of the Nursing Department will be also recommended.

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A BOMBAY Central News telegram says that an important discovery has been made, from which

DISPOSE OF THE DEAD AS NATURE DIRECTS.—Everyone interested in the reform of funeral abuses should read the brochure published by the London Necropolis Company. It can be had gratis of the Secretary, 2, Lancaster Place, Strand, or 188, Westminster Bridge Road.

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